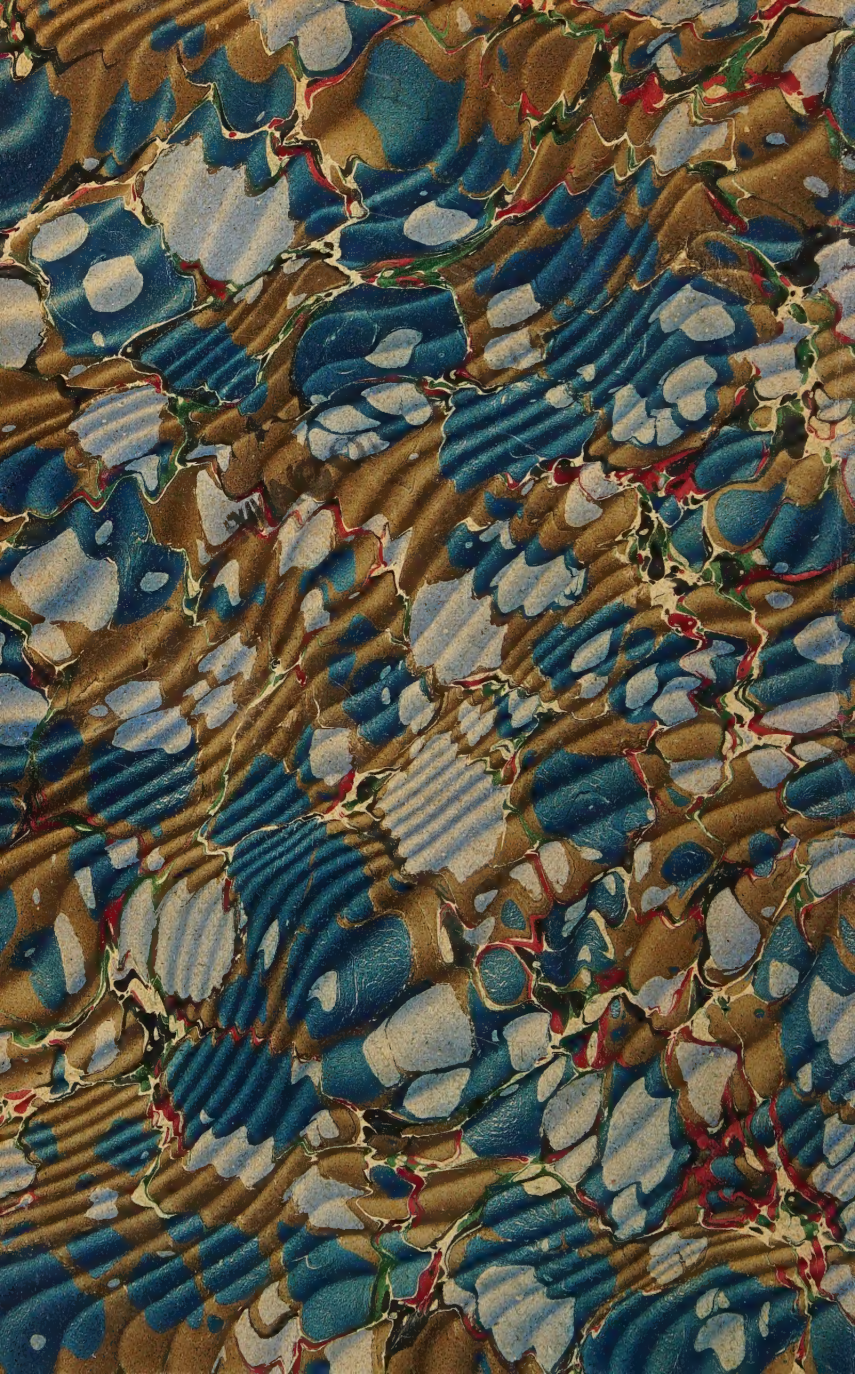

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A TRIBUTE TO GENIUS
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TESTIMONIAL
Charles Dickens

The Works of

CHARLES DICKENS

With the Life of Dickens
Introductions
Essays, Critical Comments
Arguments and Notes

WM A. COWIE

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LAUSANNE, CANTON VAUD, SWITZERLAND

The Works of

CHARLES DICKENS

Letters

Speeches, Plays and Poems

With Introduction, Critical Comments, Argument, Notes, etc.

Volume XVII

University Edition

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PREFACE.

"In his letter-writing alone," says Gissing, "Dickens did a life's literary work. Nowadays no one thinks of writing such letters; I mean, letters of such length and detail, for the quality is Dickens's own. He evidently enjoyed this use of the pen. Page after page of Forster's 'Life' is occupied with transcription from private correspondence, and never a line of this but is thoroughly worthy of print and preservation. If he makes a tour in any part of the British Isles, he writes a full description of all he sees, of everything that happens, and writes it with such gusto, such mirth, such strokes of fine picturing, as appear in no other private letters ever given to the public. Naturally buoyant in all circumstances, a holiday gave him the exhilaration of a schoolboy." This just estimate nowhere better applies than to the letters that Dickens wrote from America, many of which appear in the present volume. They make an important supplement to those published in Forster's "Life." "His letters," declares Chesterton, "are as creative as any of his literary creations. His shortest post-card is often as good as his ablest novel; each one of them is spontaneous; each one of them is different. He varies even the form and shape of the letter as far as possible; now it is in absurd French! now it is from one of his characters; now it is an advertisement for himself as a stray dog. All of them are very funny; they are not only very funny, but they are quite as funny as his finished and published work."

As no man ever expressed *himself* more in his letters than did Charles Dickens, we believe that in publishing this careful selection from his general correspondence we shall confer a peculiar benefit upon the readers and lovers of this incomparable writer. To avoid monotonous repe-

tition, the signature is dispensed with, except in the last letter, which is given in facsimile.

With regard to the speeches of Dickens—a number of which have been selected for this volume—it may be said that critics are generally agreed in praise of their high quality. "He was always ready to take the chair at a meeting for any charitable purpose with which he sympathised, and his speeches on these occasions were masterpieces of their kind." Humour and pathos, personal experiences, criticism and counsel, and, above all, his ever-abounding love for his fellow-men and his earnest pleading in behalf of all worthy endeavours of public reform—these elements are conspicuous in his speeches no less than in his other published works.

In any complete estimate of Dickens's versatile genius, some account must be made of the plays that he wrote. Three of these, written entirely by himself, are here included. "The Lamplighter" is given as printed from the manuscript in the Forster collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

In 1903 the poems of Dickens, scattered throughout newspapers, periodicals, and his novels, were collected and published in a small volume with bibliographical notes by Frederic G. Kitton. His text and arrangement have been followed in the present instance, with the exception of the songs, etc., from "The Village Coquettes" and "The Lamplighter," which will be found in their proper places in this volume. The present edition retains Mr. Kitton's valuable bibliographical notes. Three poems have been added, two of which were discovered in "Household Words," entitled "Hiram Powers' Greek Slave" and "Aspire!"; while the third, "The Blacksmith," appeared in "All the Year Round."

J. N
MACON TENN.

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS.

To Mrs. Hogarth.

Doughty Street,
Thursday Night, Twenty-sixth October, 1837.

My dear Mrs. Hogarth—I need not thank you for your present* of yesterday, for you know the sorrowful pleasure I shall take in wearing it, and the care with which I shall prize it, until—so far as relates to this life—I am like her.

I have never had her ring off my finger by day or night, except for an instant at a time, to wash my hands, since she died. I have never had her sweetness and excellence absent from my mind so long. I can solemnly say that, waking or sleeping, I have never lost the recollection of our hard trial and sorrow, and I feel that I never shall.

It will be a great relief to my heart when I find you sufficiently calm upon this sad subject to claim the promise I made you when she lay dead in this house, never to shrink from speaking of her, as if her memory must be avoided, but rather to take a melancholy pleasure in recalling the times when we were all so happy—so happy that increase of fame and prosperity has only widened the gap in my affections, by causing me to think how she would have shared and enhanced all our joys, and how proud I should have been (as God knows I always was) to possess the affections of the gentlest and purest creature that ever shed a light on earth. I wish you could know how I weary now for the three rooms in Furnival's Inn, and how I miss that pleasant smile and those sweet words which, bestowed upon our evening's work, in our merry banterings round the fire, were more

---

* A chain made of Mary Hogarth's hair, sent on her first birth-anniversary after her death.—Ed.

precious to me than the applause of a whole world would be. I can recall everything she said and did in those happy days, and could show you every passage and line we read together.

I see *now* how you are capable of making great efforts, even against the afflictions you have to deplore, and I hope that, soon, our words may be where our thoughts are, and that we may call up those old memories, not as shadows of the bitter past, but as lights upon a happier future.—Believe me, my dear Mrs. Hogarth,

Ever truly and affectionately yours.

To Mrs. Charles Dickens.

Greta Bridge, *Thursday, First February*, 1838.

My dearest Kate—I am afraid you will receive this later than I could wish, as the mail does not come through this place until two o'clock to-morrow morning. However I have availed myself of the very first opportunity of writing, so the fault is that mail's and not this.

We reached Grantham between nine and ten on Thursday night, and found everything prepared for our reception in the very best inn I have ever put up at. It is odd enough that an old lady, who had been outside all day and came in towards dinner-time, turned out to be the mistress of a Yorkshire school returning from the holiday stay in London. She was a very queer old lady, and showed us a long letter she was carrying to one of the boys from his father, containing a severe lecture (enforced and aided by many texts of Scripture) on his refusing to eat boiled meat. She was very communicative, drank a great deal of brandy-and-water, and towards evening became insensible, in which state we left her.

Yesterday we were up again shortly after seven a.m., came on upon our journey by the Glasgow mail, which charged us the remarkably low sum of six pounds fare for two places inside. We had a very droll male companion until seven o'clock in the evening, and a most delicious lady's-maid for twenty miles, who implored us to keep a sharp look-out at the coach windows, as she expected the carriage was coming to meet her and she was afraid of missing it. We had many delightful vauntings of the same kind; but in the end it is scarcely necessary

to say that the coach did not come, but a very dirty girl did.

As we came further north the snow grew deeper. About eight o'clock it began to fall heavily, and, as we crossed the wild heaths hereabout, there was no vestige of a track. The mail kept on well, however, and at eleven we reached a bare place with a house, standing alone in the midst of a dreary moor, which the guard informed us was Greta Bridge. I was in a perfect agony of apprehension, for it was fearfully cold, and there were no outward signs of anybody being up in the house. But to our great joy we discovered a comfortable room, with drawn curtains and a most blazing fire. In half an hour they gave us a smoking supper and a bottle of mulled port (in which we drank your health), and then we retired to a couple of capital bedrooms, in each of which there was a rousing fire halfway up the chimney.

We have had for breakfast, toast, cakes, a Yorkshire pie, a piece of beef about the size and much the shape of my portmanteau, tea, coffee, ham and eggs; and are now going to look about us. Having finished our discoveries, we start in a postchaise for Barnard Castle, which is only four miles off, and there I deliver the letter given me by Mitton's friend. All the schools are round about that place, and a dozen old abbeys besides, which we shall visit by some means or other to-morrow. We shall reach York on Saturday I hope, and (God willing) I trust I shall be at home on Wednesday morning.

I wish you would call on Mrs. Bentley and thank her for the letter; you can tell her when I expect to be in York.

A thousand loves and kisses to the darling boy, whom I see in my mind's eye crawling about the floor of this Yorkshire inn. Bless his heart, I would give two sovereigns for a kiss. Remember me too to Frederick, who I hope is attentive to you.

Is it not extraordinary that the same dreams which have constantly visited me since poor Mary died follow me everywhere? After all the change of scene and fatigue, I have dreamt of her ever since I left home, and no doubt shall till I return. I should be sorry to lose such visions, for they are very happy ones, if it be only the seeing her in one's sleep. I would fain believe, too, sometimes,

that her spirit may have some influence over them, but their perpetual repetition is extraordinary.—Ever, my dear Kate, Your affectionate Husband.

To Mrs. Charles Dickens.

Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury,
Thursday, First November, 1838.

My dearest Love—I received your welcome letter on arriving here last night, and am rejoiced to hear that the dear children are so much better. I hope that in your next, or your next but one, I shall learn that they are quite well. A thousand kisses to them. I wish I could convey them myself.

We found a roaring fire, an elegant dinner, a snug room, and capital beds all ready for us at Leamington, after a very agreeable (but very cold) ride. We started in a postchaise next morning for Kenilworth, with which we were both enraptured, and where I really think we must have lodgings next summer, please God that we are in good health and all goes well. You cannot conceive how delightful it is. To read among the ruins in fine weather would be perfect luxury. From here we went on to Warwick Castle, which is an ancient building, newly restored, and possessing no very great attraction beyond a fine view and some beautiful pictures; and thence to Stratford-upon-Avon, where we sat down in the room where Shakespeare was born, and left our autographs and read those of other people and so forth.

We remained at Stratford all night, and found to our unspeakable dismay that father's plan of proceeding by Bridgenorth was impracticable, as there were no coaches. So we were compelled to come here by way of Birmingham and Wolverhampton, starting at eight o'clock through a cold wet fog, and travelling, when the day had cleared up, through miles of cinder-paths, and blazing furnaces, and roaring steam-engines, and such a mass of dirt, gloom, and misery, as I never before witnessed. We got pretty well accommodated here when we arrived at half-past four, and are now going off in a postchaise to Llangollen—thirty miles—where we shall remain to-night, and where the Bangor mail will take us up to-morrow. Such are our movements up to this point, and

when I have received your letter at Chester I shall write to you again and tell you when I shall be back. I can say positively that I shall not exceed the fortnight, and I think it very possible that I may return a day or two before it expires.

We were at the play last night. It was a bespeak—"The Love Chase," a ballet (with a phenomenon!), divers songs, and "A Roland for an Oliver." It is a good theatre, but the actors are very funny. Browne laughed with such indecent heartiness at one point of the entertainment, that an old gentleman in the next box suffered the most violent indignation. The bespeak party occupied two boxes, the ladies were full-dressed, and the gentlemen, to a man, in white gloves with flowers in their button-holes. It amused us mightily, and was really as like the Miss Snevellicci business as it could well be.

My side has been very bad since I left home, although I have been very careful, remaining to the full as abstemious as usual, and have not eaten any great quantity, having no appetite. I suffered such an ecstasy of pain all night at Stratford that I was half dead yesterday, and was obliged last night to take a dose of henbane. The effect was most delicious. I slept soundly, and without feeling the least uneasiness, and am a great deal better this morning; neither do I find that the henbane has affected my head, which, from the great effect it had upon me—exhilarating me to the most extraordinary degree, and yet keeping me sleepy—I feared it would. If I had not got better I should have turned back to Birmingham, and come straight home by the railroad. As it is, I hope I shall make out the trip.

God bless you, my darling. I long to be back with you again and to see the sweet Babs.

Your faithful and most affectionate Husband.

To Master Hastings Hughes.*

Doughty Street, London, *Twelfth December*, 1838.

Respected Sir—I have given Squeers one cut on the neck and two on the head, at which he appeared much

* A little boy who had written to Dickens his views and wishes as to rewards and punishments for various characters in "Nicholas Nickleby."—Ed.

surprised and began to cry, which, being a cowardly thing, is just what I should have expected from him—wouldn't you?

I have carefully done what you told me in your letter about the lamb and the two "sheeps" for the little boys. They have also had some good ale and porter, and some wine. I am sorry you didn't say *what* wine you would like them to have. I gave them some sherry which they liked very much, except one boy, who was a little sick and choked a good deal. He was rather greedy, and that's the truth, and I believe it went the wrong way, which I say served him right, and I hope you will say so too.

Nicholas had his roast lamb, as you said he was to, but he could not eat it all, and says if you do not mind his doing so he should like to have the rest hashed to-morrow with some greens, which he is very fond of, and so am I. He said he did not like to have his porter hot, for he thought it spoilt the flavour, so I let him have it cold. You should have seen him drink it. I thought he never would have left off. I also gave him three pounds of money, all in sixpences, to make it seem more, and he said directly that he should give more than half to his mamma and sister, and divide the rest with poor Smike. And I say he is a good fellow for saying so; and if anybody says he isn't I am ready to fight him whenever they like—there!

Fanny Squeers shall be attended to, depend upon it. Your drawing of her is very like, except that I don't think the hair is quite curly enough. The nose is particularly like hers, and so are the legs. She is a nasty disagreeable thing, and I know it will make her very cross when she sees it; and what I say is that I hope it may. You will say the same I know—at least I think you will.

I meant to have written you a long letter, but I cannot write very fast when I like the person I am writing to, because that makes me think about them, and I like you, and so I tell you. Besides, it is just eight o'clock at night, and I always go to bed at eight o'clock, except when it is my birthday, and then I sit up to supper. So I will not say anything more besides this—and that is my love to you and Neptune; and if you will drink

my health every Christmas Day I will drink yours—come.—I am, Respected Sir,

Your affectionate Friend.

To W. C. Macready.

Doughty Street, *Sunday* [1839].

My dear Macready *—I ought not to be sorry to hear of your abdication, but I am, notwithstanding, most heartily and sincerely sorry, for my own sake and the sake of thousands, who may now go and whistle for a theatre—at least, such a theatre as you gave them; and I do now in my heart believe that for a long and dreary time that exquisite delight has passed away. If I may jest with my misfortunes, and quote the Portsmouth critic of Mr. Crummles's company, I say that: "As an exquisite embodiment of the poet's visions and a realisation of human intellectuality, gilding with refulgent light our dreamy moments, and laying open a new and magic world before the mental eye, the drama is gone—perfectly gone."

With the same perverse and unaccountable feeling which causes a heart-broken man at a dear friend's funeral to see something irresistibly comical in a red-nosed or one-eyed undertaker, I receive your communication with ghostly facetiousness; though on a moment's reflection I find better cause for consolation in the hope that, relieved from your most trying and painful duties, you will now have leisure to return to pursuits more congenial to your mind and to move more easily and pleasantly among your friends. In the long catalogue of the latter, I believe that there is not one prouder of the name, or more grateful for the store of delightful recollections you have enabled him to heap up from boyhood, than, my dear Macready,

Yours always faithfully.

---

* Answer to Macready's letter announcing his retirement from the management of Covent Garden Theatre.—Ed.

To J. P. Harley.

Doughty Street,
Thursday Morning [*Seventh February*, 1839].

My dear Harley—This is my birthday. Many happy returns of the day to you and me.

I took it into my head yesterday to get up an impromptu dinner on this auspicious occasion—only my own folks, Leigh Hunt, Ainsworth, and Forster. I know you can't dine here in consequence of the tempestuous weather on the Covent Garden shores, but if you will come in when you have done Trinculizing, you will delight me greatly, and add in no inconsiderable degree to the "conviviality" of the meeting.

Lord bless my soul! Twenty-seven years old. Who'd have thought it? I *never* did!

But I grow sentimental. Always yours truly.

To Thomas Mitton.

New London Inn, Exeter,
Wednesday Morning, Sixth March, 1839.

Dear Tom—Perhaps you have heard from Kate that I succeeded yesterday in the very first walk, and took a cottage at a place called Alphington, one mile from Exeter, which contains, on the ground-floor, a good parlour and kitchen, and above, a full-sized country drawing-room and three bedrooms; in the yard behind, coal-holes, fowl-houses, and meat-safes out of number; in the kitchen, a neat little range; in the other rooms, good stoves and cupboards; and all for twenty pounds a year, taxes included. There is a good garden at the side well stocked with cabbages, beans, onions, celery, and some flowers. The stock belonging to the landlady (who lives in the adjoining cottage), there was some question whether she was not entitled to half the produce, but I settled the point by paying five shillings, and becoming absolute master of the whole!

I do assure you that I am charmed with the place and the beauty of the country round about, though I have not seen it under very favourable circumstances, for it snowed when I was there this morning, and blew bitterly from the east yesterday. It is really delightful, and

when the house is to rights and the furniture all in, I shall be quite sorry to leave it. I have had some few things, second-hand, but I take it seventy pounds will be the mark, even taking this into consideration. I include in that estimate glass and crockery, garden tools, and such like-little things. There is a spare bedroom of course. That I have furnished too.

I am on terms of the closest intimacy with Mrs. Samuell, the landlady, and her brother and sister-in-law, who have a little farm hard by. They are capital specimens of country folks, and I really think the old woman herself will be a great comfort to my mother. Coals are dear just now—twenty-six shillings a ton. They found me a boy to go two miles out and back again to order some this morning. I was debating in my mind whether I should give him eighteenpence or two shillings, when his fee was announced—twopence!

The house is on the high-road to Plymouth, and, though in the very heart of Devonshire, there is as much long-stage and posting life as you would find in Piccadilly. The situation is charming. Meadows in front, an orchard running parallel to the garden hedge, richly-wooded hills closing in the prospect behind, and, away to the left, before a splendid view of the hill on which Exeter is situated, the cathedral towers rising up into the sky in the most picturesque manner possible. I don't think I ever saw so cheerful or pleasant a spot. The drawing-room is nearly, if not quite, as large as the outer room of my old chambers in Furnival's Inn. The paint and paper are new, and the place clean as the utmost excess of snowy cleanliness can be.

You would laugh if you could see me powdering away with the upholsterer, and endeavouring to bring about all sorts of impracticable reductions and wonderful arrangements. He has by him two second-hand carpets; the important ceremony of trying the same comes off at three this afternoon. I am perpetually going backwards and forwards. It is two miles from here, so I have plenty of exercise, which so occupies me and prevents my being lonely that I stopped at home to read last night, and shall to-night, although the theatre is open. Charles Kean has been the star for the last two evenings. He was stopping in this house, and went away this morning.

I have got his sitting-room now, which is smaller and more comfortable than the one I had before.

You will have heard perhaps that I wrote to my mother to come down to-morrow. There are so many things she can make comfortable at a much less expense than I could, that I thought it best. If I had not, I could not have returned on Monday, which I now hope to do, and to be in town at half-past eight.

Will you tell my father that if he could devise any means of bringing him down, I think it would be a great thing for him to have Dash, if it be only to keep down the trampers and beggars.

* * * * * *

To W. C. Macready.

40 Albion Street, Broadstairs,
Twenty-first September, 1839.

My dear Macready—Let me prefix to the last number of "Nickleby," and to the book, a duplicate of the leaf which I now send you. Believe me that there will be no leaf in the volume which will afford me in times to come more true pleasure and gratification, than that in which I have written your name as foremost amongst those of the friends whom I love and honour. Believe me, there will be no one live in it conveying a more honest truth or a more sincere feeling than that which describes its dedication to you as a slight token of my admiration and regard.

So let me tell the world by this frail record that I was a friend of yours, and interested to no ordinary extent in your proceedings at that interesting time when you showed them such noble truths in such noble forms, and gave me a new interest in, and associations with, the labours of so many months.

I write to you very hastily and crudely, for I have been very hard at work, having only finished to-day, and my head spins yet. But you know what I mean.—I am then always, believe me, my dear Macready,

Faithfully yours.

PS.—(Proof of Dedication enclosed): "To W. C. Macready, Esq., the following pages are inscribed, as a

slight token of admiration and regard, by his friend, the Author."

To George Cattermole.

1 Devonshire Terrace,
Monday, Thirteenth January, 1840.

My dear Cattermole—I am going to propound a mightily grave matter to you. My new periodical work appears—or I should rather say the first number does—on Saturday, the 28th of March; and as it has to be sent to America and Germany, and must therefore be considerably in advance, it is now in hand; I having in fact begun it on Saturday last. Instead of being published in monthly parts at a shilling each only, it will be published in weekly parts at threepence and monthly parts at a shilling; my object being to baffle the imitators and make it as novel as possible. The plan is a new one—I mean the plan of the fiction—and it will comprehend a great variety of tales. The title is: "Master Humphrey's Clock."

Now, among other improvements, I have turned my attention to the illustrations, meaning to have woodcuts dropped into the text and no separate plates. I want to know whether you would object to make me a little sketch for a woodcut—in indian-ink would be quite sufficient—about the size of the enclosed scrap; the subject, an old quaint room with antique Elizabethan furniture, and in the chimney-corner an extraordinary old clock—the clock belonging to Master Humphrey, in fact, and no figures. This I should drop into the text at the head of my opening page.

I want to know besides—as Chapman and Hall are my partners in the matter, there need be no delicacy about my asking or your answering the question—what would be your charge for such a thing, and whether (if the work answers our expectations) you would like to repeat the joke at regular intervals, and if so, on what terms? I should tell you that I intend to ask Maclise * to join me likewise, and that the copying the drawing on wood and the cutting will be done in first-rate style. We are justi-

* Maclise, however, did not join in this undertaking. Mr. Cattermole's fellow-illustrator was Hablot K. Browne.—Ed.

fied by past experience in supposing that the sale would be enormous, and the popularity very great; and when I explain to you the notes I have in my head, I think you will see that it opens a vast number of very good subjects.

I want to talk the matter over with you, and wish you would fix your own time and place—either here or at your house or at the Athenæum, though this would be the best place, because I have my papers about me. If you would take a chop with me, for instance, on Tuesday or Wednesday, I could tell you more in two minutes than in twenty letters, albeit I have endeavoured to make this as businesslike and stupid as need be.

Of course all these tremendous arrangements are as yet a profound secret, or there would be fifty Humphreys in the field. So write me a line like a worthy gentleman, and convey my best remembrances to your worthy lady. —Believe me always, my dear Cattermole,

Faithfully yours.

To George Cattermole.

1 Devonshire Terrace,
Monday, Ninth March, 1840.

My dear Cattermole—I have been induced, on looking over the works of the "Clock," to make a slight alteration in their disposal, by virtue of which the story about "John Podgers" will stand over for some little time, and that short tale will occupy its place which you have already by you, and which treats of the assassination of a young gentleman under circumstances of peculiar aggravation. I shall be greatly obliged to you if you will turn your attention to this last morsel as the feature of No. 3, and still more if you can stretch a point with regard to time (which is of the last importance just now), and make a subject out of it, rather than find one in it. I would neither have made this alteration nor have troubled you about it, but for weighty and cogent reasons which I feel very strongly, and into the composition of which caprice or fastidiousness has no part.

I should tell you perhaps, with reference to Chapman and Hall, that they will never trouble you (as they never trouble me) but when there is real and pressing occasion,

and that their representations in this respect, unlike those of most men of business, are to be relied upon.

I cannot tell you how admirably I think Master Humphrey's room comes out, or what glowing accounts I hear of the second design you have done. I had not the faintest anticipation of anything so good—taking into account the material and the despatch.—Believe me, dear Cattermole, Heartily yours.

To Daniel Maclise, R.A.

Broadstairs, *Second June*, 1840.

My dear Maclise,

My foot is in the house,
My bath is on the sea,
And, before I take a souse,
Here's a single note to thee.

It merely says that the sea is in a state of extraordinary sublimity; that this place is, as the Guide Book most justly observes, "unsurpassed for the salubrity of the refreshing breezes, which are wafted on the ocean's pinions from far-distant shores." That we are all right after the perils and voyages of yesterday. That the sea is rolling away in front of the window at which I indite this epistle, and that everything is as fresh and glorious as fine weather and a splendid coast can make it. Bear these recommendations in mind, and shunning Talfourdian pledges, come to the bower which is shaded for you in the one-pair front, where no chair or table has four legs of the same length, and where no drawers will open till you have pulled the pegs off, and then they keep open and won't shut again.

Come!

I can no more. Always faithfully yours.

To T. J. Thompson.

Devonshire Terrace,
Tuesday, Fifteenth December, 1840.

My dear Thompson—I have received a most flattering message from the head turnkey of the jail this morning, intimating that "there warn't a genelman in all London he'd be gladder to show his babies to, than Muster

Dickins, and let him come wenever he would to that shop he wos welcome." But as the Governor (who is a very nice fellow and a gentleman) is not at home this morning, and furthermore as the morning itself has rather gone out of town in respect of its poetical allurements, I think we had best postpone our visit for a day or two.

Faithfully yours.

To George Cattermole.

Devonshire Terrace, *Friday Morning.*

My dear Cattermole—I sent the MS. of the enclosed proof, marked 2, up to Chapman and Hall, from Devonshire, mentioning a subject of an old gateway, which I had put in expressly with a view to your illustrious pencil. By a mistake, however, it went to Browne instead. Chapman is out of town, and such things have gone wrong in consequence.

The subject to which I wish to call your attention is in an unwritten number to follow this one, but it is a mere echo of what you will find at the conclusion of this proof marked 2. I want the cart, gaily decorated, going through the street of the old town with the wax brigand displayed to fierce advantage, and the child seated in it also dispersing bills. As many flags and inscriptions about Jarley's War Work fluttering from the cart as you please. You know the wax brigands, and how they contemplate small oval miniatures? That's the figure I want. I send you the scrap of MS. which contains the subject.

Will you, when you have done this, send it with all speed to Chapman and Hall, as we are mortally pressed for time, and I must go hard to work to make up for what I have lost by being dutiful and going to see my father.

I want to see you about a frontispiece to our first "Clock" volume, which will come out (I think) at the end of September, and about other matters. When shall we meet, and where?

Could you dine with us on Sunday, at six o'clock sharp? I'd come and fetch you in the morning, and we could take a ride and walk. We shall be quite alone, unless Macready comes. What say you?

Don't forget despatch, there's a dear fellow, and ever believe me, Heartily yours.

To George Cattermole.

Devonshire Terrace,
Thursday, Fourteenth January, 1841.

My dear Cattermole—I cannot tell you how much obliged I am to you for altering the child, or how much I hope that my wish in that respect didn't go greatly against the grain.

I saw the old inn this morning. Words cannot say how good it is. I can't bear the thought of its being cut, and should like to frame and glaze it in *statu quo* for ever and ever.

Will you do a little tail-piece for the "Curiosity" story? —only one figure if you like—giving some notion of the etherealised spirit of the child; something like those little figures in the frontispiece. If you will, and can despatch it at once, you will make me happy.

I am, for the time being, nearly dead with work and grief for the loss of my child.—Always, my dear George, Heartily yours.

To George Cattermole.

Devonshire Terrace,
Thursday Night, Twenty-eighth January, 1841.

My dear George—I sent to Chapman and Hall yesterday morning about the second subject for No. 2 of "Barnaby," but found they had sent it to Browne.

The first subject of No. 3 I will either send to you on Saturday, or, at latest, on Sunday morning. I have also directed Chapman and Hall to send you proofs of what has gone before, for reference, if you need it.

I want to know whether you feel ravens in general and would fancy Barnaby's raven in particular. Barnaby being an idiot, my notion is to have him always in company with a pet raven, who is immeasurably more knowing than himself. To this end I have been studying my bird, and think I could make a very queer character of

him. Should you like the subject when this raven makes his first appearance? Faithfully always.

To John Tomlin.

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park, London, *Tuesday, Twenty-third February*, 1841.

Dear Sir—You are quite right in feeling assured that I should answer the letter you have addressed to me. If you have entertained a presentiment that it would afford me sincere pleasure and delight to hear from a warm-hearted and admiring reader of my books in the back-woods of America, you would not have been far wrong.

I thank you cordially and heartily both for your letter and its kind and courteous terms. To think that I have awakened a fellow-feeling and sympathy with the creatures of many thoughtful hours among the vast solitudes in which you dwell, is a source of the purest delight and pride to me; and believe me that your expressions of affectionate remembrance and approval, sounding from the green forests on the banks of the Mississippi, sink deeper into my heart and gratify it more than all the honorary distinctions that all the courts in Europe could confer.

It is such things as these that make one hope one does not live in vain, and that are the highest reward of an author's life. To be numbered among the household gods of one's distant countrymen, and associated with their homes and quiet pleasures; to be told that in each nook and corner of the world's great mass there lives one well-wisher who holds communion with one in the spirit, is a worthy fame indeed, and one which I would not barter for a mine of wealth.

That I may be happy enough to cheer some of your leisure hours for a very long time to come, and to hold a place in your pleasant thoughts, is the earnest wish of "Boz."

And, with all good wishes for yourself, and with a sincere reciprocation of all your kindly feeling, I am, dear Sir, Faithfully yours.

To a Minister of the Gospel.

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park,
Thursday, Eighth April, 1841.

Dear Sir *—I am much obliged to you for your interesting letter. Nor am I the less pleased to receive it, by reason that I cannot find it in my conscience to agree in many important respects with the body to which you belong.

In love of virtue and hatred of vice, in the detestation of cruelty and encouragement of gentleness and mercy, all men who endeavour to be acceptable to their Creator in any way, may freely agree. There are more roads to Heaven, I am inclined to think, than any sect believes; but there can be none which have not these flowers garnishing the way.

I feel it a great tribute, therefore, to receive your letter. It is most welcome and acceptable to me. I thank you for it heartily, and am proud of the approval of one who suffered in this youth, even more than my poor child.

While you teach in your walk of life the lessons of tenderness you have learnt in sorrow, trust me that in mine, I will pursue cruelty and oppression, the enemies of all God's creatures of all codes and creeds, so long as I have the energy of thought and the power of giving it utterance. Faithfully yours.

To Mr. G. Lovejoy.

Devonshire Terrace, *Tenth June*, 1841.

Dear Sir—I am favoured with your note † of yesterday's date, and lose no time in replying to it.

The sum you mention, though small I am aware in the abstract, is greater than I could afford for such a purpose; as the mere sitting in the House and attending to my duties, if I were a member, would oblige me to make many pecuniary sacrifices, consequent upon the very nature of my pursuits.

The course you suggest did occur to me when I re-

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* Written to a dissenting minister who, like Oliver Twist, had been a workhouse boy.—Ed.

† Relating to a request from the people of Reading that Dickens would represent them in Parliament.—Ed.

ceived your first letter, and I have very little doubt indeed that the Government would support me—perhaps to the whole extent. But I cannot satisfy myself that to enter Parliament under such circumstances would enable me to pursue that honourable independence without which I could neither preserve my own respect nor that of my constituents. I confess therefore (it may be from not having considered the points sufficiently, or in the right light) that I cannot bring myself to propound the subject to any member of the administration whom I know. I am truly obliged to you nevertheless, and am, dear Sir,

Faithfully yours.

To George Cattermole.

Devonshire Terrace,
Wednesday Evening, Twenty-eighth July, 1841.

My dear George—Can you do for me by Saturday evening—I know the time is short, but I think the subject will suit you, and I am greatly pressed—a party of rioters (with Hugh and Simon Tappertit conspicuous among them) in old John Willet's bar, turning the liquor taps to their own advantage, smashing bottles, cutting down the grove of lemons, sitting astride on casks, drinking out of the best punch-bowls, eating the great cheese, smoking sacred pipes, etc. etc.; John Willet, fallen backward in his chair, regarding them with a stupid horror, and quite alone among them, with none of The Maypole customers at his back.

It's in your way, and you'll do it a hundred times better than I can suggest it to you, I know.

Faithfully yours.

To the Same.

Broadstairs, *Friday, Sixth August,* 1841.

My dear George—Here is a subject for the next number [of "Barnaby Rudge"]; the next to that I hope to send you the MS. of very early in the week, as the best opportunities of illustration are all coming off now, and we are in the thick of the story.

The rioters went, sir, from John Willet's bar (where you saw them to such good purpose) straight to The Warren, which house they plundered, sacked, burned,

pulled down as much of as they could, and greatly damaged and destroyed. They are supposed to have left it about half an hour. It is night, and the ruins are here and there flaming and smoking. I want—if you understand—to show one of the turrets laid open—the turret where the alarm-bell is, mentioned in No. 1; and among the ruins (at some height if possible) Mr. Haredale just clutching our friend, the mysterious file, who is passing over them like a spirit; Solomon Daisy, if you can introduce him, looking on from the ground below.

Please to observe that the M.F. wears a large cloak and a slouched hat. This is important, because Browne will have him in the same number, and he has not changed his dress meanwhile. Mr. Haredale is supposed to have come down here on horseback, pell-mell; to be excited to the last degree. I think it will make a queer picturesque thing in your hands. I have told Chapman and Hall that you may like to have a block of a peculiar shape for it. One of them will be with you almost as soon as you receive this.—Always, dear Cattermole,

Heartily yours.

To W. C. Macready.

Broadstairs, *Tuesday, Twenty-fourth August,* 1841.

My dear Macready—I must thank you most heartily and cordially, for your kind note relative to poor Overs.* I can't tell you how glad I am to know that he thoroughly deserves such kindness.

What a good fellow Elliotson is. He kept him in his room a whole hour, and has gone into his case as if he were Prince Albert; laying down all manner of elaborate projects and determining to leave his friend Wood in town when he himself goes away, on purpose to attend to him. Then he writes me four sides of paper about

* A carpenter dying of consumption, to whom Dr. Elliotson had shown extraordinary kindness. "When poor Overs was dying" (wrote Dickens to Forster), "he suddenly asked for a pen and ink and some paper, and made up a little parcel for me, which it was his last conscious act to direct. She (his wife) told me this, and gave it me. I opened it last night. It was a copy of his little book, in which he had written my name, 'with his devotion.' I thought it simple and affecting of the poor fellow."—Ed.

the man, and says he can't go back to his old work, for that requires muscular exertion (and muscular exertion he mustn't make). What are we to do with him? He says: "Here's five pounds for the present."

I declare before God that I could almost bear the Jones's for five years out of the pleasure I feel in knowing such things, and when I think that every dirty speck upon the fair face of the Almighty's creation, who writes in a filthy, beastly newspaper; every rotten-hearted pander who has been beaten, kicked, and rolled in the kennel, yet struts it in the editorial "We," once a week; every vagabond that an honest man's gorge must rise at; every live emetic in that noxious drug-shop the press, can have his fling at such men and call them knaves and fools and thieves, I grow so vicious that, with bearing hard upon my pen, I break the nib down, and, with keeping my teeth set, make my jaws ache.

I have put myself out of sorts for the day, and shall go and walk, unless the direction of this sets me up again. On second thoughts I think it will.—Always, my dear Macready, Your faithful Friend.

To George Cattermole.

Broadstairs, *Sunday, Twelfth September*, 1841.

My dear George—Firstly. Will you design, upon a block of wood, Lord George Gordon, alone and very solitary, in his prison in the Tower? The chamber as ancient as you please, and after your own fancy; the time, evening; the season, summer.

Secondly. Will you ditto upon a ditto, a sword duel between Mr. Haredale and Mr. Chester, in a grove of trees? No one close by. Mr. Haredale has just pierced his adversary, who has fallen, dying, on the grass. He (that is, Chester) tries to staunch the wound in his breast with his handkerchief; has his snuff-box on the earth beside him, and looks at Mr. Haredale (who stands with his sword in his hand, looking down on him) with most supercilious hatred, but polite to the last. Mr. Haredale is more sorry than triumphant.

Thirdly. Will you conceive and execute, after your own fashion, a frontispiece for "Barnaby"?

Fourthly. Will you also devise a subject representing

"Master Humphrey's Clock" as stopped; his chair by the fireside, empty; his crutch against the wall; his slippers on the cold hearth; his hat upon the chair-back; the MSS. of "Barnaby" and the "Curiosity Shop" heaped upon the table; and the flowers you introduced in the first subject of all withered and dead? Master Humphrey being supposed to be no more.

I have a fifthly, sixthly, seventhly, and eighthly; for I sorely want you, as I approach the close of the tale, but I won't frighten you, so we'll take breath.—Always, my dear Cattermole, Heartily yours.

To L. Gaylord Clark.

Twenty-eighth September, 1841.

My dear Sir—I condole with you from my heart on the loss * you have sustained, and I feel proud of your permitting me to sympathise with your affliction. It is a great satisfaction to me to have been addressed, under similar circumstances, by many of your countrymen since the "Curiosity Shop" came to a close. Some simple and honest hearts in the remote wilds of America have written me letters on the loss of children—so numbering my little book, or rather heroine, with their household gods; and so pouring out their trials and sources of comfort in them, before me as a friend, that I have been inexpressibly moved, and am whenever I think of them, I do assure you. You have already all the comfort, that I could lay before you; all, I hope, that the affectionate spirit of your brother, now in happiness, can shed into your soul.

On the fourth of next January, if it please God, I am coming with my wife on a three or four months' visit to America. The British and North American packet will bring me, I hope, to Boston, and enable me, in the third week of the new year, to set my foot upon the soil I have trodden in my day-dreams many times and whose sons (and daughters) I yearn to know and to be among.

I hope you are surprised, and I hope not unpleasantly.

Faithfully yours.

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* The death of his correspondent's twin-brother, Willis Gaylord Clark.—Ed.

To Mrs. Hogarth.*

Devonshire Terrace,
Sunday, Twenty-fourth October, 1841.

My dear Mrs. Hogarth—For God's sake be comforted, and bear this well, for the love of your remaining children.

I had always intended to keep poor Mary's grave for us and our dear children, and for you. But if it will be any comfort to you to have poor George buried there, I will cheerfully arrange to place the ground at your entire disposal. Do not consider me in any way. Consult only your own heart. Mine seems to tell me that as they both died so young and so suddenly, they ought both to be buried together.

Try—do try—to think that they have but preceded you to happiness, and will meet you with joy in heaven. There *is* consolation in the knowledge that you have treasure there, and that while you live on earth, there are creatures among the angels, who owed their being to you.

Always yours with true affection.

To Mary Talfourd.

Devonshire Terrace,
Sixteenth December, 1841.

My dear Mary—I should be delighted to come and dine with you on your birthday, and to be as merry as I wish you to be always; but as I am going, within a very few days afterwards, a very long distance from home, and I shall not see any of my children for six long months, I have made up my mind to pass all that week at home for their sakes; just as you would like your papa and mamma to spend all the time they possibly could spare with you if they were about to make a dreary voyage to America; which is what I am going to do myself.

But although I cannot come to see you on that day, you may be sure I shall not forget that it is your birthday, and that I shall drink your health and many happy returns, in a glass of wine, filled as full as it will hold. And I shall dine at half-past five myself, so that we may

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* On the death of her son George.—Ed.

both be drinking our wine at the same time; and I shall tell my Mary (for I have got a daughter of that name but she is a very small one as yet) to drink your health too; and we shall try and make believe that you are here, or that we are in Russell Square, which is the best thing we can do, I think, under the circumstances.

You are growing up so fast that by the time I come home again I expect you will be almost a woman; and in a very few years we shall be saying to each other: "Don't you remember what the birthdays used to be in Russell Square?" and "How strange it seems!" and "How quickly time passes!" and all that sort of thing, you know. But I shall always be very glad to be asked on your birthday, and to come if you will let me, and to send my love to you, and to wish that you may live to be very old and very happy, which I do now with all my heart.—Believe me always, my dear Mary,

Yours affectionately.

To Washington Irving.

My dear Sir—There is no man in the world who could have given me the heartfelt pleasure you have, by your kind note of the thirteenth of last month. There is no living writer, and there are very few among the dead, whose approbation I should feel so proud to earn. And with everything you have written upon my shelves, and in my thoughts, and in my heart of hearts, I may honestly and truly say so. If you could know how earnestly I write this, you would be glad to read it—as I hope you will be, faintly guessing at the warmth of the hand I autobiographically hold out to you over the broad Atlantic.

I wish I could find in your welcome letter some hint of an intention to visit England. I can't. I have held it at arm's length, and taken a bird's-eye view of it, after reading it a great many times, but there is no greater encouragement in it this way than on a microscopic inspection. I should love to go with you—as I have gone, God knows how often—into Little Britain, and Eastcheap, and Green Arbour Court, and Westminster Abbey. I should like to travel with you, outside the last of the coaches down to Bracebridge Hall. It would make my heart glad to compare notes with you about that shabby

gentleman in the oilcloth hat and red nose, who sat in the nine-cornered back-parlour of the Masons' Arms; and about Robert Preston and the tallow-chandler's widow, whose sitting-room is second nature to me; and about all those delightful places and people that I used to walk about and dream of in the daytime, when a very small and not over-particularly-taken-care-of boy. I have a good deal to say, too, about that dashing Alonzo de Ojeda, that you can't help being fonder of than you ought to be; and much to hear concerning Moorish legend, and poor unhappy Boabdil. Diedrich Knickerbocker I have worn to death in my pocket, and yet I should show you his mutilated carcass with a joy past all expression.

I have been so accustomed to associate you with my pleasantest and happiest thoughts, and with my leisure hours, that I rush at once into full confidence with you, and fall, as it were naturally and by the very laws of gravity, into your open arms. Questions come thronging to my pen as to the lips of people who meet after long hoping to do so. I don't know what to say first or what to leave unsaid, and am constantly disposed to break off and tell you again how glad I am this moment has arrived.

My dear Washington Irving, I cannot thank you enough for your cordial and generous praise, or tell you what deep and lasting gratification it has given me. I hope to have many letters from you, and to exchange a frequent correspondence. I send this to say so. After the first two or three I shall settle down into a connected style, and become gradually rational.

You know what the feeling is, after having written a letter, sealed it, and sent it off. I shall picture you reading this, and answering it before it has lain one night in the post-office. Ten to one that before the fastest packet could reach New York I shall be writing again.

Do you suppose the post-office clerks care to receive letters? I have my doubts. They get into a dreadful habit of indifference. A postman, I imagine, is quite callous. Conceive his delivering one to himself, without being startled by a preliminary double knock!

Always your faithful Friend.

To Thomas Mitton.

Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool,
Monday, Third January, 1842.

My dear Mitton—This is a short note, but I will fulfil the adage and make it a merry one.

We came down in great comfort. Our luggage is now aboard. Anything so utterly and monstrously absurd as the size of our cabin, "no gentleman of England who lives at home at ease" can for a moment imagine. Neither of the portmanteaus would go into it. There!

These Cunard packets are not very big you know actually, but the quantity of sleeping-berths makes them much smaller, so that the saloon is not nearly as large as in one of the Ramsgate boats. The ladies' cabin is so close to ours that I could knock the door open without getting off something they call my bed, but which I believe to be a muffin beaten flat. This is a great comfort, for it is an excellent room (the only good one in the ship); and if there be only one other lady besides Kate, as the stewardess thinks, I hope I shall be able to sit there very often.

They talk of seventy passengers, but I can't think there will be so many; they talk besides (which is even more to the purpose) of a very fine passage, having had a noble one this time last year. God send it so! We are in the best spirits, and full of hope. I was dashed for a moment when I saw our "cabin," but I got over that directly, and laughed so much at its ludicrous proportions, that you might have heard me all over the ship.

God bless you! Write to me by the first opportunity. I will do the like to you.—And always believe me,

Your old and faithful Friend.

To Thomas Mitton.

Tremont House, Boston, *Thirty-first January*, 1842.

My dear Mitton—I am so exhausted with the life I am obliged to lead here, that I have had time to write but one letter which is at all deserving of the name, as giving any account of our movements. Forster has it in trust, to tell you all its news; and he has also some newspapers which I had an opportunity of sending him, in which you will find further particulars of our progress.

We had a dreadful passage, the worst, the officers all concur in saying, that they have ever known. We were eighteen days coming; experienced a dreadful storm which swept away our paddle-boxes and stove our life-boats; and ran around besides, near Halifax, among rocks and breakers, where we lay at anchor all night. After we left the English Channel we had only one fine day. And we had the additional discomfort of being eighty-six passengers. I was ill five days, Kate six; though, indeed, she had a swelled face and suffered the utmost terror all the way.

I can give you no conception of my welcome here. There never was a king or emperor upon the earth so cheered and followed by crowds, and entertained in public at splendid balls and dinners, and waited on by public bodies and deputations of all kinds. I have had one from the Far West—a journey of two thousand miles! If I go out in a carriage, the crowd surround it and escort me home; if I go to the theatre, the whole house (crowded to the roof) rises as one man, and the timbers ring again. You cannot imagine what it is. I have five great public dinners on hand at this moment, and invitations from every town and village and city in the States.

There is a great deal afloat here in the way of subjects for description. I keep my eyes open pretty wide, and hope to have done so to some purpose by the time I come home. Always your faithful Friend.

To John Forster.

United States Hotel, Philadelphia,
Sunday, Sixth March, 1842.

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I have often asked Americans in London which were the better railroads—ours or theirs? They have taken time for reflection, and generally replied on mature consideration that they rather thought we excelled; in respect of the punctuality with which we arrived at our stations, and the smoothness of our travelling. I wish you could see what an American railroad is, in some parts where I now have seen them. I won't say I wish you could feel what it is, because that would be an unchristian and savage aspiration. It is never inclosed, or

warded off. You walk down the main street of a large town; and, slap-dash, headlong, pell-mell, down the middle of the street; with pigs burrowing, and boys flying kites and playing marbles, and men smoking, and women talking, and children crawling, close to the very rails; there comes tearing along a mad locomotive with its train of cars, scattering a red-hot shower of sparks (from its *wood* fire) in all directions; screeching, hissing, yelling, and panting; and nobody one atom more concerned than if it were a hundred miles away. You cross a turn-pike road; and there is no gate, no policeman, no signal—nothing to keep the wayfarer or quiet traveller out of the way, but a wooden arch on which is written in great letters "Look out for the locomotive." And if any man, woman, or child, don't look out, why it's his or her fault, and there's an end of it.

The cars are like very shabby omnibuses—only larger; holding sixty or seventy people. The seats, instead of being placed long ways, are put cross-wise, back to front. Each holds two. There is a long row of these on each side of the caravan, and a narrow passage up the centre. The windows are usually all closed, and there is very often, in addition, a hot, close, most intolerable charcoal stove in a red-hot glow. The heat and closeness are quite insupportable. But this is the characteristic of all American houses, of all the public institutions, chapels, theatres, and prisons. From the constant use of the hard anthracite coal in these beastly furnaces, a perfectly new class of diseases is springing up in the country. Their effect upon an Englishman is briefly told. He is always very sick and very faint; and has an intolerable headache, morning, noon, and night.

In the ladies' car, there is no smoking of tobacco allowed. All gentlemen who have ladies with them, sit in this car; and it is usually very full. Before it, is the gentlemen's car; which is something narrower. As I had a window close to me yesterday which commanded this gentlemen's car, I looked at it pretty often, perforce. The flashes of saliva flew so perpetually and incessantly out of the windows all the way, that it looked as though they were ripping open feather-beds inside, and letting the wind dispose of the feathers. But this spitting is universal. In the courts of law, the judge has his spit-

toon on the bench, the counsel have theirs, the witness has his, the prisoner his, and the crier his. The jury are accommodated at the rate of three men to a spittoon (or spit-box as they call it here); and the spectators in the gallery are provided for, as so many men who in the course of nature expectorate without cessation. There are spit-boxes in every steamboat, bar-room, public dining-room, house of office, and place of general resort, no matter what it be. In the hospitals, the students are requested, by placard, to use the boxes provided for them, and not to spit upon the stairs. I have twice seen gentlemen, at evening parties in New York, turn aside when they were not engaged in conversation, and spit upon the drawing-room carpet. And in every bar-room and hotel passage the stone floor looks as if it were paved with open oysters —from the quantity of this kind of deposit which tesselates it all over. . . .

The institutions at Boston, and at Hartford, are most admirable. It would be very difficult indeed to improve upon them. But this is not so at New York; where there is an ill-managed lunatic asylum, a bad jail, a dismal workhouse, and a perfectly intolerable place of police-imprisonment. A man is found drunk in the streets, and is thrown into a cell below the surface of the earth; profoundly dark; so full of noisome vapours that when you enter it with a candle you see a ring about the light, like that which surrounds the moon in wet and cloudy weather; and so offensive and disgusting in its filthy odours, that you *cannot bear* its stench. He is shut up within an iron door, in a series of vaulted passages where no one stays; has no drop of water, or ray of light, or visitor, or help of any kind; and there he remains until the magistrate's arrival. If he die (as one man did not long ago) he is half eaten by the rats in an hour's time (as this man was). I expressed, on seeing these places the other night, the disgust I felt, and which it would be impossible to repress. "Well; I don't know," said the night constable —that's a national answer by the bye—"Well; I don't know. I've had six-and-twenty young women locked up here together, and beautiful ones too, and that's a fact." The cell was certainly no larger than the wine-cellar in Devonshire Terrace; at least three feet lower; and stunk like a common sewer. There was one woman in it, then.

The magistrate begins his examinations at five o'clock in the morning; the watch is set at seven at night; if the prisoners have been given in charge by an officer, they are not taken out before nine or ten; and in the interval they remain in these places, where they could no more be heard to cry for help, in case of a fit or swoon among them, than a man's voice could be heard after he was coffined up in his grave.

There is a prison in this same city, and indeed in the same building, where prisoners for grave offences await their trial, and to which they are sent back when under remand. It sometimes happens that a man or woman will remain here for twelve months, waiting the result of motions for new trial, and in arrest of judgment, and what not. I went into it the other day without any notice or preparation, otherwise I find it difficult to catch them in their work-a-day aspect. I stood in a long, high, narrow building, consisting of four galleries one above the other, with a bridge across each, on which sat a turnkey, sleeping or reading as the case might be. From the roof, a couple of windsails dangled and drooped, limp and useless; the skylight being fast closed, and they only designed for summer use. In the centre of the building was the eternal stove; and along both sides of every gallery was a long row of iron doors—looking like furnace doors, being very small, but black and cold as if the fires within had gone out.

A man with keys appears, to show us round. A good-looking fellow, and, in his way, civil and obliging.

"Suppose a man's here for twelve months. Do you mean to say he never comes out at that little iron door."

"He *may* walk some, perhaps—not much."

"Will you show me a few of them?"

"Ah! All, if you like."

He threw open a door, and I looked in. An old man was sitting on his bed, reading. The light came in through a small chink, very high up in the wall. Across the room ran a thick iron pipe to carry off filth; this was bored for the reception of something like a big funnel in shape; and over the funnel was a water-cock. This was his washing apparatus and water-closet. It was not savoury, but not very offensive. He looked up at me; gave himself an odd, dogged kind of shake; and fixed his eyes on

his book again. I came out, and the door was shut and locked. He had been there a month, and would have to wait another month for his trial. "Has he ever walked out now, for instance?" "No." . . .

"In England, if a man is under sentence of death even, he has a yard to walk in at certain times."

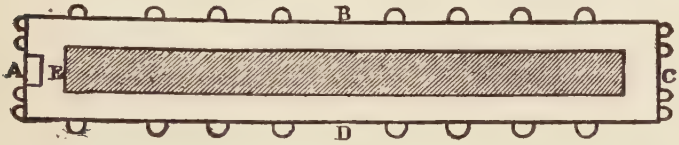
"Possible?"

. . . Making me this answer with a coolness which is perfectly untranslatable and inexpressible, and which is quite peculiar to the soil, he took me to the women's side; telling me, upon the way, all about this man, who, it seems, murdered his wife, and will certainly be hanged. The women's doors have a small square aperture in them; I looked through one, and saw a pretty boy about ten or twelve years old, who seemed lonely and miserable enough—as well he might. "What's *he* been doing?" says I. "Nothing," says my friend. "Nothing!" says I. "No," says he. "He's here for safe keeping. He saw his father kill his mother, and is detained to give evidence against him—that was his father, you saw just now." "But that's rather hard treatment for a witness, isn't it?"—"Well! I don't know. It a'nt a very rowdy life, and *that's* a fact." So my friend, who was an excellent fellow in his way, and very obliging, and a handsome young man to boot, took me off to show me some more curiosities; and I was very much obliged to him, for the place was so hot, and I so giddy, that I could scarcely stand. . . .

When a man is hanged in New York, he is walked out of one of these cells, without any condemned sermon or other religious formalities, straight into the narrow jail-yard, which may be about the width of Cranbourn Alley. There, a gibbet is erected, which is of curious construction; for the culprit stands on the earth with the rope about his neck, which passes through a pulley in the top of the "Tree" (see "Newgate Calendar" *passim*), and is attached to a weight something heavier than the man. This weight being suddenly let go, drags the rope down with it, and sends the criminal flying up fourteen feet into the air; while the judge, and jury, and five and twenty citizens (whose presence is required by the law), stand by, that they may afterwards certify to the fact. This yard is a very dismal place; and when I looked at

it, I thought the practice infinitely superior to ours; much more solemn, and far less degrading and indecent.

There is another prison near New York which is a house of correction. The convicts labour in stone-quarries near at hand, but the jail has no covered yards or shops, so that when the weather is wet (as it was when I was there) each man is shut up in his own little cell, all the livelong day. These cells, in all the correction-houses I have seen, are on one uniform plan—thus:



A, B, C, and D, are the walls of the building with windows in them, high up in the wall. The shaded place in the centre represents four tiers of cells, one above the other, with doors of grated iron, and a light grated gallery to each tier. Four tiers front to B, and four to D, so that by this means you may be said, in walking round, to see eight tiers in all. The intermediate blank space you walk in, looking up at these galleries; so that, coming in at the door E, and going either to the right or left till you come back to the door again, you see all the cells under one roof and in one high room. Imagine them in number four hundred, and in every one a man locked up; this one with his hands through the bars of his grate, this one in bed (in the middle of the day, remember), and this one flung down in a heap upon the ground with his head against the bars like a wild beast. Make the rain pour down in torrents outside. Put the everlasting stove in the midst; hot, suffocating, and vaporous, as a witch's cauldron. Add a smell like that of a thousand old mildewed umbrellas wet through, and a thousand dirty clothes-bags musty, moist, and fusty, and you will have some idea—a very feeble one, my dear friend, on my word—of this place yesterday week. You know of course that we adopted our improvements in prison-discipline from the American pattern; but I am confident that the writers who have the most lustily lauded the American prisons, have never seen Chesterton's domain

or Tracey's. There is no more comparison between those two prisons of ours, and any I have seen here YET, than there is between the keepers here, and those two gentlemen. Putting out of sight the difficulty we have in England of finding *useful* labour for the prisoners (which of course arises from our being an older country, and having vast numbers of artisans unemployed), our system is more complete, more impressive, and more satisfactory in every respect. It is very possible that I have not come to the best, not having seen yet Mount Auburn. I will tell you when I have. And also when I have come to those inns, mentioned—vaguely rather—by Miss Martineau, where they undercharge literary people for the love the landlords bear them. My experience, so far, has been of establishments where (perhaps for the same reason) they very monstrously and violently overcharge a man whose position forbids remonstrance.

WASHINGTON, *Sunday, Thirteenth March*, 1842.

In allusion to the last sentence, my dear friend, I must tell you a slight experience I had in Philadelphia. My rooms had been ordered for a week, but, in consequence of Kate's illness, only Mr. Q.* and the luggage had gone on. Mr. Q. always lives at the table d'hôte, so that while we were in New York our rooms were empty. The landlord not only charged me half the full rent for the time during which the rooms were reserved for us (which was quite right), but charged me also *for board for myself and Kate and Anne, at the rate of nine dollars per day* for the same period, when we were actually living, at the same expense, in New York!!! I *did* remonstrate upon this head; but was coolly told it was the custom (which I have since been assured is a lie), and had nothing for it but to pay the amount. What else could I do? I was going away by the steamboat at five o'clock in the morning; and the landlord knew perfectly well that my disputing an item of his bill would draw upon me the sacred wrath of the newspapers, which would one and all demand in capitals if THIS was the gratitude of the man whom America had received as she had never received any other man but Lafayette?

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* Dickens's secretary.—ED.

I went last Tuesday to the Eastern Penitentiary near Philadelphia, which is the only prison in the States, or I believe in the world, on the principle of hopeless, strict, and unrelaxed solitary confinement, during the whole term of the sentence. It is wonderfully kept, but a most dreadful, fearful place. The inspectors, immediately on my arrival in Philadelphia, invited me to pass the day in the jail, and to dine with them when I had finished my inspection, that they might hear my opinion of the system. Accordingly I passed the whole day in going from cell to cell, and conversing with the prisoners. Every facility was given me, and no constraint whatever imposed upon any man's free speech. If I were to write you a letter of twenty sheets, I could not tell you this one day's work; so I will reserve it until that happy time when we shall sit round the table at Jack Straw's—you, and I, and Mac *—and go over my diary. I never shall be able to dismiss from my mind the impressions of that day. Making notes of them, as I have done, is an absurdity, for they are written, beyond all power of erasure, in my brain. I saw men who had been there, five years, six years, eleven years, two years, two months, two days; some whose term was nearly over, and some whose term had only just begun. Women, too, under the same variety of circumstances. Every prisoner who comes into the jail, comes at night; is put into a bath, and dressed in the prison garb; and then a black hood is drawn over his face and head, and he is led to the cell from which he never stirs again until his whole period of confinement has expired. I looked at some of them with the same awe as I should have looked at men who had been buried alive, and dug up again.

We dined in the jail; and I told them after dinner how much the sight had affected me, and what an awful punishment it was. I dwelt upon this; for, although the inspectors are extremely kind and benevolent men, I question whether they are sufficiently acquainted with the human mind to know what it is they are doing. Indeed, I am sure they do not know. I bore testimony, as every one who sees it must, to the admirable government of the institution; and added that nothing could justify

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3 * Maclise.—Ed.

such a punishment, but its working a reformation in the prisoners. That for short terms—say two years for the maximum—I conceived, especially after what they had told me of its good effects in certain cases, it might perhaps be highly beneficial; but that, carried to so great an extent, I thought it cruel and unjustifiable; and further, that their sentences for small offences were very rigorous, not to say savage. All this, they took like men who were really anxious to have one's free opinion and to do right. And we were very much pleased with each other, and parted in the friendliest way.

They sent me back to Philadelphia in a carriage they had sent for me in the morning; and then I had to dress in a hurry, and follow Kate to Cary's the bookseller's where there was a party. He married a sister of Leslie's. There are three Miss Leslies here, very accomplished; and one of them has copied all her brother's principal pictures. These copies hang about the room. We got away from this as soon as we could; and next morning had to turn out at five. In the morning I had received and shaken hands with five hundred people, so you may suppose that I was pretty well tired. Indeed I am obliged to be very careful of myself; to avoid smoking and drinking; to get to bed soon; and to be particular in respect of what I eat. . . . You cannot think how bilious and trying the climate is. One day it is hot summer, without a breath of air; the next, twenty degrees below freezing, with a wind blowing that cuts your skin like steel. These changes have occurred here several times since last Wednesday night.

I have altered my route, and don't mean to go to Charleston. The country, all the way from here, is nothing but a dismal swamp; there is a bad night of seacoasting in the journey; the equinoctial gales are blowing hard; and Clay * (a most *charming* fellow, by the bye), whom I have consulted, strongly dissuades me. The weather is intensely hot there; the spring fever is coming on; and there is very little to see, after all. We therefore go next Wednesday night to Richmond, which we shall reach on Thursday. There, we shall stop three days; my object being to see some tobacco plantations.

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* Henry Clay.—Ed.

Then we shall go by James river back to Baltimore, which we have already passed through, and where we shall stay two days. Then we shall go West at once, straight through the most gigantic part of this continent: across the Alleghany Mountains, and over a prairie.

To Professor Felton.*

Fuller's Hotel, Washington,
Monday, Fourteenth March, 1842.

My dear Felton—I was more delighted than I can possibly tell you to receive (last Saturday night) your welcome letter. We and the oysters missed you terribly in New York. You carried away with you more than half the delight and pleasure of my New World; and I heartily wish you could bring it back again.

There are very interesting men in this place—highly interesting, of course—but it's not a comfortable place; is it? If spittle could wait at table we should be nobly attended, but as that property has not been imparted to it in the present state of mechanical science, we are rather lonely and orphan-like, in respect of "being looked arter." A blithe black was introduced on our arrival, as our peculiar and especial attendant. He is the only gentleman in the town who has a peculiar delicacy in intruding upon my valuable time. It usually takes seven rings and a threatening message from —— to produce him; and when he comes he goes to fetch something, and, forgetting it by the way, comes back no more.

We have been in great distress, really in distress, at the non-arrival of the Caledonia. You may conceive what our joy was, when, while we were out dining yesterday, Putnam † arrived with the joyful intelligence of her safety. The very news of her having really arrived seemed to diminish the distance between ourselves and home, by one half at least.

And this morning (though we have not yet received our heap of despatches, for which we are looking eagerly forward to this night's mail)—this morning there reached

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* Cornelius Conway Felton, professor of Greek (afterwards president) at Harvard College.—Ed.

† An American gentleman, who travelled with Dickens, as his secretary, during his visit to America.—Ed.

us unexpectedly, through the Government bag (Heaven knows how they came there!), two of our many and long-looked-for letters, wherein was a circumstantial account of the whole conduct and behaviour of our pets; with marvellous narrations of Charley's precocity at a Twelfth Night juvenile party at Macready's; and tremendous predictions of the governess, dimly suggesting his having got out of pot-hooks and hangers, and darkly insinuating the possibility of his writing us a letter before long; and many other workings of the same prophetic spirit, in reference to him and his sisters, very gladdening to their mother's heart, and not at all depressing to their father's. There was, also, the doctor's report, which was a clean bill; and the nurse's report, which was perfectly electrifying; showing as it did how Master Walter had been weaned, and had cut a double tooth, and done many other extraordinary things, quite worthy of his high descent. In short, we were made very happy and grateful; and felt as if the prodigal father and mother had got home again.

What do you think of this incendiary card being left at my door last night? "General G. sends compliments to Mr. Dickens, and called with two literary ladies. As the two L. L.'s are ambitious of the honour of a personal introduction to Mr. D., General G. requests the honour of an appointment for to-morrow." I draw a veil over my sufferings. They are sacred. We shall be in Buffalo, please Heaven, on the thirtieth of April. If I don't find a letter from you in the care of the postmaster at that place, I'll never write to you from England.

But if I *do* find one, my right hand shall forget its cunning, before I forget to be your truthful and constant correspondent; not, dear Felton, because I promised it, nor because I have a natural tendency to correspond (which is far from being the case), nor because I am truly grateful to you for, and have been made truly proud by, that affectionate and elegant tribute which——sent me, but because you are a man after my own heart, and I love you *well*. And for the love I bear you, and the pleasure with which I shall always think of you, and the glow I shall feel when I see your handwriting in my own home, I hereby enter into a solemn league and covenant to write as many letters to you as you write to me, at least. Amen.

Come to England! Come to England! Our oysters are small, I know; they are said by Americans to be coppery; but our hearts are of the largest size. We are thought to excel in shrimps, to be far from despicable in point of lobsters, and in periwinkles are considered to challenge the universe. Our oysters, small though they be, are not devoid of the refreshing influence which that species of fish is supposed to exercise in these latitudes. Try them and compare. Affectionately yours.

To John Forster.

Richmond, *Thursday Night, Seventeenth March*, 1842.

Irving was with me at Washington yesterday, and *wept heartily* at parting. He is a fine fellow, when you know him well; and you would relish him, my dear friend, of all things. We have laughed together at some absurdities we have encountered in company, quite in my vociferous Devonshire Terrace style. The "Merrikin" Government have treated him, he says, most liberally and handsomely in every respect. He thinks of sailing for Liverpool on the 7th of April; passing a short time in London; and then going to Paris. Perhaps you may meet him. If you do, he will know that you are my dearest friend, and will open his whole heart to you at once. His secretary of legation, Mr. Coggleswell, is a man of very remarkable information, a great traveller, a good talker, and a scholar.

I am going to sketch you our trip here from Washington, as it involves nine miles of a "Virginny Road." That done, I must be brief, good brother.* . . .

We had intended to go to Baltimore from Richmond, by a place called Norfolk: but one of the boats being under repair, I found we should probably be detained at this Norfolk two days. Therefore we came back here yesterday, by the road we had travelled before; lay here last night; and go on to Baltimore this afternoon, at four o'clock. It is a journey of only two hours and a half.

* The reader of the "American Notes" will remember the humorous descriptions of the night steamer on the Potomac, and of the black driver over the Virginia-road. Both were in this letter; which, after three days, he resumed "At Washington again, Monday, March the twenty-first."—Forster.

Richmond is a prettily situated town; but, like other towns in slave districts (as the planters themselves admit), has an aspect of decay and gloom which to an unaccustomed eye is *most* distressing. In the black car (for they don't let them sit with the whites), on the railroad as we went there, were a mother and family whom the steamer was conveying away, to sell; retaining the man (the husband and father I mean) on his plantation. The children cried the whole way. Yesterday, on board the boat, a slave-owner and two constables were our fellow-passengers. They were coming here in search of two negroes who had run away on the previous day. On the bridge at Richmond there is a notice against fast driving over it, as it is rotten and crazy; penalty—for whites, five dollars; for slaves, fifteen stripes. My heart is lightened as if a great load had been taken from it, when I think that we are turning our backs on this accursed and detested system. I really don't think I could have borne it any longer. It is all very well to say "be silent on the subject." They won't let you be silent. They *will* ask you what you think of it; and *will* expatiate on slavery as if it were one of the greatest blessings of mankind. "It's not," said a hard, bad-looking fellow to me the other day, "it's not the interest of a man to use his slaves ill. It's damned nonsense that you hear in England."—I told him quietly that it was not a man's interest to get drunk, or to steal, or to game, or to indulge in any other vice, but he *did* indulge in it for all that. That cruelty, and the abuse of irresponsible power, were two of the bad passions of human nature, with the gratification of which, considerations of interest or of ruin had nothing whatever to do; and that, while every candid man must admit that even a slave might be happy enough with a good master, all human beings knew that bad masters, cruel masters, and masters who disgraced the form they bore, were matters of experience and history, whose existence was as undisputed as that of slaves themselves. He was a little taken aback by this, and asked me if I believed in the Bible. Yes, I said, but if any man could prove to me that it sanctioned slavery, I would place no further credence in it. "Well, then," he said, "by God, sir, the niggers must be kept down, and the whites have put down the coloured people wherever they have found

them." "That's the whole question," said I. "Yes, and by God," says he, "the British had better not stand out on that point when Lord Ashburton comes over, for I never felt so warlike as I do now—and that's a fact." I was obliged to accept a public supper in this Richmond, and I saw plainly enough, there, that the hatred which these Southern States bear to us as a nation has been fanned up and revived again by this Creole * business, and can scarcely be exaggerated. . . . We were desperately tired at Richmond, as we went to a great many places, and received a very great number of visitors. We appoint usually two hours in every day for this latter purpose, and have our room so full at that period that it is difficult to move or breathe. Before we left Richmond, a gentleman told me, when I really was so exhausted that I could hardly stand, that "three people of great fashion" were much offended by having been told, when they called last evening, that I was tired and not visible, then, but would be "at home" from twelve to two next day! Another gentleman (no doubt of great fashion also) sent a letter to me two hours after I had gone to bed preparatory to rising at four next morning, with instructions to the slave who brought it to knock me up and wait for an answer!

I am going to break my resolution of accepting no more public entertainments, in favour of the originators of the printed document overleaf.† They live upon the confines of the Indian territory, some two thousand miles or more west of New York! Think of my dining there! And yet, please God, the festival will come off—I should say about the 12th or 15th of next month. . . .

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* Alluding to a controversy between the United States and Great Britain (1841–42) growing out of a revolt of slaves on board the American brig Creole. The vessel was taken by the mutineers to Nassau, New Providence, where the case was disposed of by the British authorities, despite the protest of the American Government. The incident was attended with circumstances that gave it importance in the history of the anti-slavery conflict.—Ed.

† The printed document was a series of resolutions, moved at a public meeting attended by all the principal citizens, judges, professors, and doctors, of St. Louis, urgently inviting, to that city of the Far West, the distinguished writer then the guest of America, eulogising his genius, and tendering to him their warmest hospitalities.—Forster.

To Washington Irving.

Washington,
Monday Afternoon, Twenty-first March, 1842.

My dear Irving—We passed through—literally passed through—this place again to-day. I did not come to see you, for I really have not the heart to say "good-bye" again, and felt more than I can tell you when we shook hands last Wednesday.

You will not be at Baltimore, I fear? I thought, at the time, that you only said you might be there, to make our parting the gayer.

Wherever you go, God bless you! What pleasure I have had in seeing and talking with you, I will not attempt to say. I shall never forget it as long as I live. What would I give, if we could have but a quiet week together! Spain is a lazy place, and its climate an indolent one. But if you have ever leisure under its sunny skies to think of a man who loves you, and holds communion with your spirit oftener, perhaps, than any other person alive—leisure from listlessness, I mean—and will write to me in London, you will give me an inexpressible amount of pleasure. Your affectionate Friend.

To W. C. Macready.

Baltimore, *Twenty-second March*, 1842.

My dear Friend—I beg your pardon, but you were speaking of rash leaps at hasty conclusions. Are you quite sure you designed that remark for me? Have you not, in the hurry of correspondence, slipped a paragraph into my letter which belongs of right to somebody else? When did you ever find me leap at wrong conclusions? I pause for a reply.

Pray, sir, did you ever find me admiring Mr. ——? On the contrary, did you never hear of my protesting through good, better, and best report that he was not an open or a candid man, and would one day, beyond all doubt, displease you by not being so? I pause again for a reply.

Are you quite sure, Mr. Macready—and I address myself to you with the sternness of a man in the pit—are you quite sure, sir, that you do not view America through the pleasant mirage which often surrounds a thing that has

been, but not a thing that is? Are you quite sure that when you were here you relished it as well as you do now when you look back upon it? The early spring birds, Mr. Macready, *do* sing in the groves that you were, very often, not over well pleased with many of the new country's social aspects. Are the birds to be trusted? Again I pause for a reply.

My dear Macready, I desire to be so honest and just to those who have so enthusiastically and earnestly welcomed me, that I burned the last letter I wrote to you —even to you to whom I would speak as to myself— rather than let it come with anything that might seem like an ill-considered word of disappointment. I preferred that you should think me neglectful (if you could imagine anything so wild) rather than I should do wrong in this respect. Still it is of no use. I *am* disappointed. This is not the republic I came to see; this is not the republic of my imagination. I infinitely prefer a liberal monarchy—even with its sickening accompaniments of court circulars—to such a government as this. The more I think of its youth and strength, the poorer and more trifling in a thousand aspects it appears in my eyes. In everything of which it has made a boast—excepting its education of the people and its care for poor children—it sinks immeasurably below the level I had placed it upon; and England, even England, bad and faulty as the old land is, and miserable as millions of her people are, rises in the comparison.

You live here, Macready, as I have sometimes heard you imagining! *You!* Loving you with all my heart and soul, and knowing what your disposition really is, I would not condemn you to a year's residence on this side of the Atlantic for any money. Freedom of opinion! Where is it? I see a press more mean, and paltry, and silly, and disgraceful than any country I ever knew. If that is its standard, here it is. But I speak of Bancroft, and am advised to be silent on that subject, for he is "a black sheep—a Democrat." I speak of Bryant, and am entreated to be more careful, for the same reason. I speak of international copyright, and am implored not to ruin myself outright. I speak of Miss Martineau, and all parties—Slave Upholders and Abolitionists, Whigs, Tyler Whigs, and Democrats—shower down upon me a perfect

cataract of abuse. "But what has she done? Surely she praised America enough!" "Yes, but she told us of some of our faults, and Americans can't bear to be told of their faults. Don't split on that rock, Mr. Dickens, don't write about America; we are so very suspicious."

Freedom of opinion! Macready, if I had been born here and had written my books in this country, producing them with no stamp of approval from any other land, it is my solemn belief that I should have lived and died poor, unnoticed, and a "black sheep" to boot. I never was more convinced of anything than I am of that.

The people are affectionate, generous, open-hearted, hospitable, enthusiastic, good-humoured, polite to women, frank and candid to all strangers, anxious to oblige, far less prejudiced than they have been described to be, frequently polished and refined, very seldom rude or disagreeable. I have made a great many friends here, even in public conveyances, whom I have been truly sorry to part from. In the towns I have formed perfect attachments. I have seen none of that greediness and indecorousness on which travellers have laid so much emphasis. I have returned frankness with frankness; met questions not intended to be rude, with answers meant to be satisfactory; and have not spoken to one man, woman, or child of any degree who has not grown positively affectionate before we parted. In the respects of not being left alone, and of being horribly disgusted by tobacco chewing and tobacco spittle, I have suffered considerably. The sight of slavery in Virginia, the hatred of British feeling upon the subject, and the miserable hints of the impotent indignation of the South, have pained me very much! on the last head, of course, I have felt nothing but a mingled pity and amusement; on the other, sheer distress. But however much I like the ingredients of this great dish, I cannot but come back to the point upon which I started, and say that the dish itself goes against the grain with me, and that I don't like it.

You know that I am truly a Liberal. I believe I have as little pride as most men, and I am conscious of not the smallest annoyance from being "hail fellow well met" with everybody. I have not had greater pleasure in the company of any set of men among the thousands I have

received than in that of the carmen of Hertford, who presented themselves in a body in their blue frocks, among a crowd of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, and bade me welcome through their spokesman. They had all read my books, and all perfectly understood them. It is not these things I have in my mind when I say that the man who comes to this country a Radical and goes home again with his opinions unchanged, must be a Radical on reason, sympathy, and reflection, and one who has so well considered the subject that he has no chance of wavering.

We have been to Boston, Worcester, Hartford, New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Fredericksburgh, Richmond, and back to Washington again. The premature heat of the weather (it was eighty yesterday in the shade) and Clay's advice—how you would like Clay!—have made us determine not to go to Charleston; but having got to Richmond, I think I should have turned back under any circumstances. We remain at Baltimore for two days, of which this is one; then we go to Harrisburgh. Then by the canal boat and the railroad over the Alleghany Mountains to Pittsburg, then down the Ohio to Cincinnati, then to Louisville, and then to St. Louis. I have been invited to a public entertainment in every town I have entered, and have refused them; but I have excepted St. Louis as the farthest point of my travels. My friends there have passed some resolutions which Forster has, and will show you. From St. Louis we cross to Chicago, traversing immense prairies. Thence by the lakes and Detroit to Buffalo, and so to Niagara. A run into Canada follows of course, and then—let me write the blessed word in capitals—we turn towards HOME.

Kate has written to Mrs. Macready, and it is useless for me to thank you, my dearest friend, or her, for your care of our dear children, which is our constant theme of discourse. Forster has gladdened our hearts with his account of the triumph of "Acis and Galatea," and I am anxiously looking for news of the tragedy. Forrest breakfasted with us at Richmond last Saturday—he was acting there, and I invited him—and he spoke very gratefully, and very like a man, of your kindness to him when he was in London.

David Colden is as good a fellow as ever lived; and I am deeply in love with his wife. Indeed we have received the greatest and most earnest and zealous kindness from the whole family, and quite love them all. Do you remember one Greenhow, whom you invited to pass some days with you at the hotel on the Kaatskill Mountains? He is translator to the State Office at Washington, has a very pretty wife, and a little girl of five years old. We dined with them, and had a very pleasant day. The President invited me to dinner, but I couldn't stay for it. I had a private audience, however, and we attended the public drawing-room besides.

Now, don't you rush to the quick conclusion that I have rushed at a quick conclusion. Pray, be upon your guard. If you can by any process estimate the extent of my affectionate regard for you, and the rush I shall make when I reach London to take you by your true right hand, I don't object. But let me entreat you to be very careful how you come down upon the sharp-sighted individual who pens these words, which you seem to me to have done in what Willmott would call "one of Macready's rushes."—I am ever, my dear Macready,

Your faithful Friend.

To Thomas Mitton.

Baltimore, United States, *Twenty-second March*, 1842.

My dear Friend—We have been as far south as Richmond in Virginia (where they grow and manufacture tobacco, and where the labour is all performed by slaves), but the season in those latitudes is so intensely and prematurely hot, that it was considered a matter of doubtful expediency to go on to Charleston. We start for the Far West—which includes mountain travelling, and lake travelling, and prairie travelling—the day after to-morrow, at eight o'clock in the morning; and shall be in the West, and from there going northward again, until the thirtieth of April or first of May, when we shall halt for a week at Niagara, before going further into Canada. We have taken our passage home (God bless the word) in the George Washington packet-ship from New York. She sails on the seventh of June.

I have departed from my resolution not to accept any

more public entertainments—they have been proposed in every town I have visited—in favour of the people of St. Louis, my utmost western point. That town is on the borders of the Indian territory, a trifling distance from this place—only two thousand miles! At my second halting-place I shall be able to write to fix the day; I suppose it will be somewhere about the twelfth of April. Think of my going so far towards the setting sun to dinner!

In every town where we stay, though it be only for a day, we hold a regular levee or drawing-room, where I shake hands on an average with five or six hundred people, who pass on from me to Kate, and are shaken again by her. Maclise's picture of our darlings stands upon a table or sideboard the while; and my travelling secretary, assisted very often by a committee belonging to the place, presents the people in due form. Think of two hours of this every day, and the people coming in by hundreds, all fresh, and piping hot, and full of questions, when we are literally exhausted and can hardly stand! I really do believe that if I had not a lady with me, I should have been obliged to leave the country and go back to England. But for her they never would leave me alone by day or night, and as it is, a slave comes to me now and then in the middle of the night with a letter, and waits at the bedroom door for an answer.

It was so hot at Richmond that we could scarcely breathe, and the peach and other fruit trees were in full blossom; it was so cold at Washington next day that we were shivering; but even in the same town you might often wear nothing but a shirt and trousers in the morning, and two great-coats at night, the thermometer very frequently taking a little trip of thirty degrees between sunrise and sunset.

They do lay it on at the hotels in such style! They charge by the day, so that whether one dines out or dines at home makes no manner of difference. T'other day I wrote to order our rooms at Philadelphia to be ready on a certain day, and was detained a week longer than I expected in New York. The Philadelphia landlord not only charged me half rent for the rooms during the whole of that time, but board for myself and Kate and Anne *

* Mrs. Dickens's maid.—Ed.

during the whole time too, though we were actually boarding at the same expense during the same time in New York! What do you say to that? If I remonstrated, the whole virtue of the newspapers would be aroused directly.

Parties—parties—parties—of course, every day and night. But it's not all parties. I go into the prisons, the police-offices, the watch-houses, the hospitals, the workhouses. I was out half the night in New York with two of their most famous constables; started at midnight, and went into every brothel, thieves' house, murdering hovel, sailors' dancing place, and abode of villany, both black and white, in the town. I went *incog.* behind the scenes to the little theatre where Mitchell is making a fortune. He has been rearing a little dog for me, and has called him "Boz." I am going to bring him home.* In a word I go everywhere, and a hard life it is.

When I next write to you, I shall have begun, I hope, to turn my face homeward. I have a great store of oddity and whimsicality, and am going now into the oddest and most characteristic part of this most queer country.

And I am always.

To Henry Austin.

Niagara Falls (English Side),
Sunday, First May, 1842.

My dear Henry—We have had a blessed interval of quiet in this beautiful place, of which, as you may suppose, we stood greatly in need, not only by reason of our hard travelling for a long time, but on account of the incessant persecutions of the people, by land and water, on stage-coach, railway car, and steamer, which exceeds anything you can picture to yourself by the utmost stretch of your imagination. So far we have had this hotel nearly to ourselves. It is a large square house, standing on a bold height, with overhanging eaves like a Swiss cottage, and a wide handsome gallery outside

* The little dog—a white Havana spaniel—*was* brought home and renamed, after an incidental character in "Nicholas Nickleby," Mr. Snittle Timbery. This was shortened to Timber, and under that name the little dog lived to be very old, and accompanied the family in all its migrations, including the visits to Italy and Switzerland.—Ed.

every story. These colonnades make it look so very light, that it has exactly the appearance of a house built with a pack of cards; and I live in bodily terror lest any man should venture to step out of a little observatory on the roof, and crush the whole structure with one stamp of his foot.

Our sitting-room (which is large and low like a nursery) is on the second floor, and is so close to the Falls that the windows are always wet and dim with spray. Two bedrooms open out of it—one our own; one Anne's. The secretary slumbers near at hand, but without these sacred precincts. From the three chambers, or any part of them, you can see the Falls rolling and tumbling, and roaring and leaping, all day long, with bright rainbows making fiery arches down a hundred feet below us. When the sun is on them, they shine and glow like molten gold. When the day is gloomy, the water falls like snow, or sometimes it seems to crumble away like the face of a great chalk cliff, or sometimes again to roll along the front of the rock like white smoke. But it all seems gay or gloomy, dark or light, by sun or moon. From the bottom of both Falls, there is always rising up a solemn ghostly cloud, which hides the boiling cauldron from human sight, and makes it in its mystery a hundred times more grand than if you could see all the secrets that lie hidden in its tremendous depth. One Fall is as close to us as York Gate is to No. 1 Devonshire Terrace. The other (the great Horse-shoe Fall) may be, perhaps, about half as far off as "Creedy's." * One circumstance in connection with them is, in all the accounts, greatly exaggerated—I mean the noise. Last night was perfectly still. Kate and I could just hear them, at the quiet time of sunset, a mile off. Whereas, believing the statements I had heard I began putting my ear to the ground, like a savage or a bandit in a ballet, thirty miles off, when we were coming here from Buffalo.

I was delighted to receive your famous letter, and to read your account of our darlings, whom we long to see with an intensity it is impossible to shadow forth, ever so faintly. I do believe, though I say it as shouldn't, that

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* Mr. Macready's—so pronounced by one of Dickens's little children.—Ed.

they are good uns—both to look at and to go. I roared out this morning, as soon as I was awake, "Next month," which we have been longing to be able to say ever since we have been here. I really do not know how we shall ever knock at the door, when that slowest of all impossibly slow hackney-coaches shall pull up—at home.

I am glad you exult in the fight I have had about the copyright. If you knew how they tried to stop me, you would have a still greater interest in it. The greatest men in England have sent me out, through Forster, a very manly, and becoming, and spirited memorial and address, backing me in all I have done. I have despatched it to Boston for publication, and am coolly prepared for the storm it will raise. But my best rod is in pickle.

Is it not a horrible thing that scoundrel booksellers should grow rich here from publishing books, the authors of which do not reap one farthing from their issue by scores of thousands; and that every vile, blackguard, and detestable newspaper, so filthy and bestial that no honest man would admit one into his house for a scullery door-mat, should be able to publish those same writings side by side, cheek by jowl, with the coarsest and most obscene companions with which they must become connected, in course of time, in people's minds? Is it tolerable that, besides being robbed and rifled, an author should be forced to appear in any form, in any vulgar dress, in any atrocious company; that he should have no choice of his audience, no control over his own distorted text, and that he should be compelled to jostle out of the course the best men in this country, who only ask to live by writing? I vow before high heaven that my blood so boils at these enormities, that when I speak about them I seem to grow twenty feet high, and to swell out in proportion. "Robbers that ye are," I think to myself when I get upon my legs, "here goes!"

The places we have lodged in, the roads we have gone over, the company we have been among, the tobacco-spittle we have wallowed in, the strange customs we have complied with, the packing-cases in which we have travelled, the woods, swamps, prairies, lakes, and mountains we have crossed, are all subjects for legends and tales at home; quires, reams, wouldn't hold them. I don't think Anne has so much as seen an American tree. She never

looks at a prospect by any chance, or displays the smallest emotion at any sight whatever. She objects to Niagara that "it's nothing but water," and considers that "there is too much of that."

I suppose you have heard that I am going to act at the Montreal theatre with the officers? Farce-books being scarce, and the choice consequently limited, I have selected Keeley's part in "Two o'Clock in the Morning." I wrote yesterday to Mitchell, the actor and manager at New York, to get and send me a comic wig, light flaxen, with a small whisker halfway down the cheek; over this I mean to wear two nightcaps, one with a tassel and one of flannel; a flannel wrapper, drab tights and slippers, will complete the costume.

I am very sorry to hear that business is so flat, but the proverb says it never rains but it pours, and it may be remarked with equal truth upon the other side, that it never *don't* rain but it holds up very much indeed. You will be busy again long before I come home, I have no doubt.

We purpose leaving this on Wednesday morning. Give my love to Letitia and to mother, and always believe me, my dear Henry, Affectionately yours.

To Professor Felton.

Montreal, *Saturday, Twenty-first May*, 1842.

My dear Felton—I was delighted to receive your letter yesterday, and was well pleased with its contents. I anticipated objection to Carlyle's letter.* I called particular attention to it for three reasons. Firstly, because he boldly *said* what all the others *think*, and therefore deserved to be manfully supported. Secondly, because it is my deliberate opinion that I have been assailed on this subject in a manner which no man with any pretensions to public respect or with the remotest right to express an opinion on a subject of universal literary interest would be assailed in any other country. . . .

I really cannot sufficiently thank you, dear Felton, for your warm and hearty interest in these proceedings. But it would be idle to pursue that theme, so let it pass.

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* On the subject of international copyright.—Ed.

The wig and whiskers are in a state of the highest preservation. The play comes off next Wednesday night, the twenty-fifth. What would I give to see you in the front row of the centre box, your spectacles gleaming not unlike those of my dear friend Pickwick, your face radiant with as broad a grin as a staid professor may indulge in, and your very coat, waistcoat, and shoulders expressive of what we should take together when the performance was over! I would give something (not so much, but still a good round sum) if you could only stumble into that very dark and dusty theatre in the daytime (at any minute between twelve and three), and see me with my coat off, the stage manager and universal director, urging impracticable ladies and impossible gentlemen on to the very confines of insanity, shouting and driving about, in my own person, to an extent which would justify any philanthropic stranger in clapping me into a strait-waistcoat without further inquiry, endeavouring to goad Putnam into some dim and faint understanding of a prompter's duties, and struggling in such a vortex of noise, dirt, bustle, confusion, and inextricable entanglement of speech and action as you would grow giddy in contemplating. We perform "A Roland for an Oliver," "A Good Night's Rest," and "Deaf as a Post." This kind of voluntary hard labour used to be my great delight. The *furor* has come strong upon me again, and I begin to be once more of opinion that nature intended me for the lessee of a national theatre, and that pen, ink, and paper have spoiled a manager.

Oh, how I look forward across that rolling water to home and its small tenantry! How I busy myself in thinking how my books look, and where the tables are, and in what positions the chairs stand relatively to the other furniture; and whether we shall get there in the night, or in the morning, or in the afternoon; and whether we shall be able to surprise them, or whether they will be too sharply looking out for us; and what our pets will say; and how they'll look, and who will be the first to come and shake hands, and so forth! If I could but tell you how I have set my heart on rushing into Forster's study (he is my great friend, and writes at the bottom of all his letters: "My love to Felton"), and into Maclise's painting-room, and into Macready's managerial

ditto, without a moment's warning, and how I picture every little trait and circumstance of our arrival to myself, down to the very colour of the bow on the cook's cap, you would almost think I had changed places with my eldest son, and was still in pantaloons of the thinnest texture. I left all these things—God only knows what a love I have for them—as coolly and calmly as any animated cucumber; but when I come upon them again I shall have lost all power of self-restraint, and shall as certainly make a fool of myself (in the popular meaning of that expression) as ever Grimaldi did in his way, or George the Third in his.

And not the less so, dear Felton, for having found some warm hearts, and left some instalments of earnest and sincere affection, behind me on this continent. And whenever I turn my mental telescope hitherward, trust me that one of the first figures it will descry will wear spectacles so like yours that the maker couldn't tell the difference, and shall address a Greek class in such an exact imitation of your voice, that the very students hearing it should cry, "That's he! Three cheers. Hooray-ay-ay-ay-ay!"

About those joints of yours, I think you are mistaken. They *can't* be stiff. At the worst they merely want the air of New York, which, being impregnated with the flavour of last year's oysters, has a surprising effect in rendering the human frame supple and flexible in all cases of rust.

A terrible idea occurred to me as I wrote those words. The oyster-cellars—what do they do when oysters are not in season? Is pickled salmon vended there? Do they sell crabs, shrimps, winkles, herrings? The oyster-openers—what do *they* do? Do they commit suicide in despair, or wrench open tight drawers and cupboards and hermetically-sealed bottles for practice? Perhaps they are dentists out of the oyster season. Who knows?

Affectionately yours.

To Professor Felton.

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park, London, *Sunday, Thirty-first July*, 1842.

My dear Felton—Of all the monstrous and incalculable amount of occupation that ever beset one unfortu-

nate man, mine has been the most stupendous since I came home. The dinners I have had to eat, the places I have had to go to, the letters I have had to answer, the sea of business and of pleasure in which I have been plunged, not even the genius of an —— or the pen of a —— could describe.

Wherefore I indite a monstrously short and wildly uninteresting epistle to the American Dando; but perhaps you don't know who Dando was. He was an oyster-eater, my dear Felton. He used to go into oyster-shops, without a farthing of money, and stand at the counter eating natives, until the man who opened them grew pale, cast down his knife, staggered backward, struck his white forehead with his open hand, and cried, "You are Dando!!!" He has been known to eat twenty dozen at one sitting, and would have eaten forty, if the truth had not flashed upon the shopkeeper. For these offences he was constantly committed to the House of Correction. During his last imprisonment he was taken ill, got worse and worse, and at last began knocking violent double knocks at Death's door. The doctor stood beside his bed, with his fingers on his pulse. "He is going," says the doctor. "I see it in his eye. There is only one thing that would keep life in him for another hour, and that is—oysters." They were immediately brought. Dando swallowed eight, and feebly took a ninth. He held it in his mouth and looked round the bed strangely. "Not a bad one, is it?" says the doctor. The patient shook his head, rubbed his trembling hand upon his stomach, bolted the oyster, and fell back—dead. They buried him in the prison-yard, and paved his grave with oyster-shells.

We are all well and hearty, and have already begun to wonder what time next year you and Mrs. Felton and Dr. Howe will come across the briny sea together. To-morrow we go to the seaside for two months. I am looking out for news of Longfellow, and shall be delighted when I know that he is on his way to London and this house.

I am bent upon striking at the piratical newspapers with the sharpest edge I can put upon my small axe, and hope in the next session of Parliament to stop their entrance into Canada. For the first time within the memory of man, the professors of English literature seem dis-

posed to act together on this question. It is a good thing to aggravate a scoundrel, if one can do nothing else, and I think we *can* make them smart a little in this way. . . .

I wish you had been at Greenwich the other day, where a party of friends gave me a private dinner; public ones I have refused. C—— was perfectly wild at the reunion, and, after singing all manner of marine songs, wound up the entertainment by coming home (six miles) in a little open phaeton of mine, *on his head*, to the mingled delight and indignation of the metropolitan police. We were very jovial indeed; and I assure you that I drank your health with fearful vigour and energy.

On board that ship coming home I established a club, called the United Vagabonds, to the large amusement of the rest of the passengers. This holy brotherhood committed all kinds of absurdities, and dined always, with a variety of solemn forms, at one end of the table, below the mast, away from all the rest. The captain being ill when we were three or four days out, I produced my medicine-chest and recovered him. We had a few more sick men after that, and I went round "the wards" every day in great state, accompanied by two Vagabonds, habited as Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer, bearing enormous rolls of plaster and huge pairs of scissors. We were really very merry all the way, breakfasted in one party at Liverpool, shook hands, and parted most cordially. . . .

Affectionately your faithful Friend.

PS.—I have looked over my journal, and have decided to produce my American trip in two volumes. I have written about half the first since I came home, and hope to be out in October. This is "exclusive news," to be communicated to any friends to whom you may like to intrust it, my dear F——.

To Professor Felton.

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park, London, *First September*, 1842.

My dear Felton—Of course that letter in the papers was as foul a forgery as ever felon swung for. . . . I have not contradicted it publicly, nor shall I. When I tilt at

such wringings out of the dirtiest mortality, I shall be another man—indeed, almost the creature they would make me.

I gave your message to Forster, who sends a despatch-box full of kind remembrances in return. He is in a great state of delight with the first volume of my American book (which I have just finished), and swears loudly by it. It is *True* and Honourable I know, and I shall hope to send it you, complete, by the first steamer in November.

Your description of the porter and the carpet-bags prepares me for a first-rate facetious novel, brimful of the richest humour, on which I have no doubt you are engaged. What is it called? Sometimes I imagine the title-page thus:

OYSTERS
IN
EVERY STYLE
OR
OPENINGS
OF
LIFE
BY
YOUNG DANDO.

As to the man putting the luggage on his head, as a sort of sign, I adopt it from this hour.

I date this from London, where I have come, as a good profligate, graceless bachelor, for a day or two; leaving my wife and babbies at the seaside. . . . Heavens! if you were but here at this minute! A piece of salmon and a steak are cooking in the kitchen; it's a very wet day, and I have had a fire lighted; the wine sparkles on a side-table; the room looks the more snug from being the only *un*dismantled one in the house; plates are warming for Forster and Maclise, whose knock I am momentarily expecting; that groom I told you of, who never comes into the house, except when we are all out of town, is walking about in his shirt-sleeves without the smallest consciousness of impropriety; a great mound of proofs are waiting to be read aloud, after dinner. With what a shout I would clap you down into the easiest chair, my

genial Felton, if you could but appear, and order you a pair of slippers instantly!

Since I have written this, the aforesaid groom—a very small man (as the fashion is), with fiery red hair (as the fashion is *not*)—has looked very hard at me and fluttered about me at the same time, like a giant butterfly. After a pause, he says in a Sam Wellerish kind of way: "I vent to the club this mornin', sir. There vorn't no letters, sir." "Very good, Topping." "How's missis, sir?" "Pretty well, Topping." "Glad to hear it, sir. *My* missis ain't wery well, sir." "No?" "No, sir, she's a goin', sir, to have an hincrease wery soon, and it makes her rather nervous, sir; and ven a young voman gets at all down at sich a time, sir, she goes down wery deep, sir." To this sentiment I replied affirmatively, and then he adds, as he stirs the fire (as if he were thinking out loud): "Wot a mystery it is! Wot a go is natur'!" With which scrap of philosophy, he gradually gets nearer to the door, and so fades out of the room.

This same man asked me one day, soon after I came home, what Sir John Wilson was. This is a friend of mine, who took our house and servants, and everything as it stood, during our absence in America. I told him an officer. "A wot, sir?" "An officer." And then, for fear he should think I meant a police officer, I added, "An officer in the army." "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, touching his hat, "but the club as I always drove him to wos the United Servants."

The real name of this club is the United Service, but I have no doubt he thought it was a high-life-below-stairs kind of resort, and that this gentleman was a retired butler or superannuated footman.

There's the knock, and the Great Western sails, or steams rather, to-morrow. Write soon again, dear Felton, and ever believe me. . . .

Your affectionate Friend.

PS.—All good angels prosper Dr. Howe! He, at least, will not like me the less, I hope, for what I shall say of Laura.

To Professor Felton.

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park, London, *Thirty-first December*, 1842.

My dear Felton—Many and many happy New Years to you and yours! As many happy children as may be quite convenient (no more!), and as many happy meetings between them and our children, and between you and us, as the kind fates in their utmost kindness shall favourably decree!

The American book (to begin with that) has been a most complete and thorough-going success. Four large editions have now been sold *and paid for*, and it has won golden opinions from all sorts of men, except our friend in F——, who is a miserable creature; a disappointed man in great poverty, to whom I have ever been most kind and considerate (I need scarcely say that); and another friend in B——, no less a person than an illustrious gentleman named ——, who wrote a story called ——. They have done no harm, and have fallen short of their mark, which, of course, was to annoy me. Now I am perfectly free from any diseased curiosity in such respects, and whenever I hear of a notice of this kind, I never read it; whereby I always conceive (don't you?) that I get the victory. With regard to your slave-owners, they may cry, till they are as black in the face as their own slaves, that Dickens lies. Dickens does not write for their satisfaction, and Dickens will not explain for their comfort. Dickens has the name and date of every newspaper in which every one of those advertisements appeared, as they know perfectly well; but Dickens does not choose to give them, and will not at any time between this and the day of judgment. . . .

I have been hard at work on my new book, of which the first number has just appeared. The Paul Joneses who pursue happiness and profit at other men's cost will no doubt enable you to read it, almost as soon as you receive this. I hope you will like it. And I particularly commend, my dear Felton, one Mr. Pecksniff and his daughters to your tender regards. I have a kind of liking for them myself.

Blessed star of morning, such a trip as we had into

Cornwall, just after Longfellow went away! The "we" means Forster, Maclise, Stanfield (the renowned marine painter), and the Inimitable Boz. We went down into Devonshire by the railroad, and there we hired an open carriage from an innkeeper, patriotic in all Pickwick matters, and went on with post-horses. Sometimes we travelled all night, sometimes all day, sometimes both. I kept the joint-stock purse, ordered all the dinners, paid all the turnpikes, conducted facetious conversations with the post-boys, and regulated the pace at which we travelled. Stanfield (an old sailor) consulted an enormous map on all disputed points of wayfaring; and referred, moreover, to a pocket compass and other scientific instruments. The luggage was in Forster's department; and Maclise, having nothing particular to do, sang songs. Heavens! If you could have seen the necks of bottles—distracting in their immense varieties of shape—peering out of the carriage pockets! If you could have witnessed the deep devotion of the post-boys, the wild attachment of the hostlers, the maniac glee of the waiters! If you could have followed us into the earthy old churches we visited, and into the strange caverns on the gloomy sea-shore, and down into the depths of mines, and up to the tops of giddy heights where the unspeakably green water was roaring, I don't know how many hundred feet below! If you could have seen but one gleam of the bright fires by which we sat in the big rooms of ancient inns at night, until long after the small hours had come and gone, or smelt but one steam of the hot punch (not white, dear Felton, like that amazing compound I sent you a taste of, but a rich, genial, glowing brown) which came in every evening in a huge broad china bowl! I never laughed in my life as I did on this journey. It would have done you good to hear me. I was choking and gasping and bursting the buckle off the back of my stock, all the way. And Stanfield (who is very much of your figure and temperament, but fifteen years older) got into such apoplectic entanglements that we were often obliged to beat him on the back with portmanteaus before we could recover him. Seriously, I do believe there never was such a trip. And they made such sketches, those two men, in the most romantic of our halting-places, that you would have sworn we had the Spirit of Beauty with us, as well

as the Spirit of Fun. But stop till you come to England —I say no more.

The actuary of the National Debt couldn't calculate the number of children who are coming here on Twelfth Night, in honour of Charley's birthday, for which occasion I have provided a magic-lantern and divers other tremendous engines of that nature. But the best of it is that Forster and I have purchased between us the entire stock-in-trade of a conjurer, the practice and display whereof is intrusted to me. And O my dear eyes, Felton, if you could see me conjuring the company's watches into impossible tea-caddies, and causing pieces of money to fly, and burning pocket-handkerchiefs without hurting 'em, and practising in my own room, without anybody to admire, you would never forget it as long as you live. In those tricks which require a confederate, I am assisted (by reason of his imperturbable good humour) by Stanfield, who always does his part exactly the wrong way, to the unspeakable delight of all beholders. We come out on a small scale, to-night, at Forster's, where we see the old year out and the new one in. Particulars shall be forwarded in my next.

I have quite made up my mind that Forster really believes he *does* know you personally, and has all his life. He talks to me about you with such gravity that I am afraid to grin, and feel it necessary to look quite serious. Sometimes he *tells* me things about you, doesn't ask me, you know, so that I am occasionally perplexed beyond all telling, and begin to think it was he, and not I, who went to America. It's the queerest thing in the world.

The book I was to have given Longfellow for you is not worth sending by itself, being only a "Barnaby." But I will look up some manuscript for you (I think I have that of the "American Notes" complete), and will try to make the parcel better worth its long conveyance. With regard to Maclise's pictures, you certainly are quite right in your impression of them; but he is "such a discursive devil" (as he says about himself), and flies off at such odd tangents, that I feel it difficult to convey to you any general notion of his purpose. I will try to do so when I write again. I want very much to know about —— and that charming girl. . . . Give me full particulars. Will you remember me cordially to Sumner, and

say I thank him for his welcome letter? The like to Hillard, with many regards to himself and his wife, with whom I had one night a little conversation which I shall not readily forget. The like to Washington Allston, and all friends who care for me and have outlived my book. . . . Always, my dear Felton,

With true regard and affection, yours.

To Professor Felton.

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park, London, *Second March*, 1843.

My dear Felton—I don't know where to begin, but plunge headlong with a terrible splash into this letter, on the chance of turning up somewhere.

Hurrah! Up like a cork again, with the "North American Review" in my hand. Like you, my dear ——, and I can say no more in praise of it, though I go to the end of the sheet. You cannot think how much notice it has attracted here. Brougham called the other day, with the number (thinking I might not have seen it), and I being out at the time, he left a note, speaking of it, and of the writer, in terms that warmed my heart. Lord Ashburton (one of whose people wrote a notice in the "Edinburgh," which they have since publicly contradicted) also wrote to me about it in just the same strain. And many others have done the like.

I am in great health and spirits and powdering away at "Chuzzlewit," with all manner of facetiousness rising up before me as I go on. As to news, I have really none, saving that Forster has been laid up with rheumatism for weeks past, but is now, I hope, getting better. My little captain, as I call him—he who took me out, I mean, and with whom I had that adventure of the cork soles—has been in London too, and seeing all the lions under my escort. Good heavens! I wish you could have seen certain other mahogany-faced men (also captains) who used to call here for him in the morning, and bear him off to docks and rivers and all sorts of queer places, whence he always returned late at night, with rum-and-water teardrops in his eyes, and a complication of punchy smells in his mouth! He was better than a comedy to us, having marvellous ways of tying his pocket-handkerchief round

his neck at dinner-time in a kind of jolly embarrassment, and then forgetting what he had done with it; also of singing songs to wrong tunes, and calling land objects by sea names, and never knowing what o'clock it was, but taking midnight for seven in the evening; with many other sailor oddities, all full of honesty, manliness, and good temper. We took him to Drury Lane Theatre to see "Much Ado about Nothing." But I never could find out what he meant by turning round, after he had watched the first two scenes with great attention, and inquiring "whether it was a Polish piece." . . .

On the fourth of April I am going to preside at a public dinner for the benefit of the printers; and if you were a guest at that table, wouldn't I smite you on the shoulder, harder than ever I rapped the well-beloved back of Washington Irving at the City Hotel in New York!

You were asking me—I love to say asking, as if we could talk together—about Maclise. He is such a discursive fellow, and so eccentric in his might, that on a mental review of his pictures I can hardly tell you of them as leading to any one strong purpose. But the annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy comes off in May, and then I will endeavour to give you some notion of him. He is a tremendous creature, and might do anything. But, like all tremendous creatures, takes his own way, and flies off at unexpected breaches in the conventional wall.

You know H——'s book, I dare say. Ah! I saw a scene of mingled comicality and seriousness at his funeral some weeks ago, which has choked me at dinner-time ever since. C—— and I went as mourners; and as he lived, poor fellow, five miles out of town, I drove C—— down. It was such a day as I hope, for the credit of nature, is seldom seen in any parts but these—muddy, foggy, wet, dark, cold, and unutterably wretched in every possible respect. Now, C—— has enormous whiskers, which straggle all down his throat in such weather, and stick out in front of him, like a partially unravelled bird's-nest; so that he looks queer enough at the best, but when he is very wet, and in a state between jollity (he is always very jolly with me) and the deepest gravity (going to a funeral, you know), it is utterly impossible to resist him; especially as he makes the strangest remarks the mind of

man can conceive, without any intention of being funny, but rather meaning to be philosophical. I really cried with an irresistible sense of his comicality all the way; but when he was dressed out in a black cloak and a very long black hat-band by an undertaker (who, as he whispered me with tears in his eyes—for he had known H—— many years—was a "character, and he would like to sketch him"), I thought I should have been obliged to go away. However, we went into a little parlour where the funeral party was, and God knows it was miserable enough, for the widow and children were crying bitterly in one corner, and the other mourners—mere people of ceremony, who cared no more for the dead man than the hearse did—were talking quite coolly and carelessly together in another; and the contrast was as painful and distressing as anything I ever saw. There was an independent clergyman present, with his bands on and a Bible under his arm, who, as soon as we were seated, addressed C—— thus, in a loud emphatic voice: "Mr. C——, have you seen a paragraph respecting our departed friend, which has gone the round of the morning papers?" "Yes, sir," says C——, "I have," looking very hard at me the while, for he had told me with some pride coming down that it was his composition. "Oh!" said the clergyman. "Then you will agree with me, Mr. C——, that it is not only an insult to me, who am the servant of the Almighty, but an insult to the Almighty, whose servant I am." "How is that, sir?" said C——. "It is stated, Mr. C——, in that paragraph," says the minister, "that when Mr. H—— failed in business as a bookseller, he was persuaded by *me* to try the pulpit; which is false, incorrect, unchristian, in a manner blasphemous, and in all respects contemptible. Let us pray." With which, my dear Felton, and in the same breath, I give you my word, he knelt down, as we all did, and began a very miserable jumble of an extemporary prayer. I was really penetrated with sorrow for the family, but when C—— (upon his knees, and sobbing for the loss of an old friend) whispered me, "that if that wasn't a clergyman, and it wasn't a funeral, he'd have punched his head," I felt as if nothing but convulsions could possibly relieve me. . . . Faithfully always, my dear Felton.

To Douglas Jerrold.

Devonshire Terrace, *Third May*, 1843.

My dear Jerrold—Let me thank you most cordially for your books, not only for their own sakes (and I have read them with perfect delight), but also for this hearty and most welcome mark of your recollection of the friendship we have established; in which light I know I may regard and prize them.

I am greatly pleased with your opening paper in the Illuminated. It is very wise, and capital; written with the finest end of that iron pen of yours; witty, much needed, and full of truth. I vow to God that I think the parrots of Society are more intolerable and mischievous than its birds of prey. If ever I destroy myself, it will be in the bitterness of hearing those infernal and damnably good old times extolled. Once, in a fit of madness, after having been to a public dinner which took place just as this Ministry came in, I wrote the parody I send you enclosed, for Fonblanque. There is nothing in it but wrath; but that's wholesome, so I send it you.

I am writing a little history of England* for my boy, which I will send you when it is printed for him, though your boys are too old to profit by it. It is curious that I have tried to impress upon him (writing, I dare say, at the same moment with you) the exact spirit of your paper, for I don't know what I should do if he were to get hold of any Conservative or High Church notions; and the best way of guarding against any such horrible result, is, I take it, to wring the parrots' necks in his very cradle.

Oh Heaven, if you could have been with me at a hospital dinner last Monday! There were men there who made such speeches and expressed such sentiments as any moderately intelligent dustman would have blushed through his cindery bloom to have thought of. Sleek, slobbering, bow-paunched, over-fed, apoplectic, snorting cattle, and the auditory leaping up in their delight! I never saw such an illustration of the power of purse, or felt so degraded and debased by its contemplation, since I have had eyes and ears. The absurdity of the thing was too horrible to laugh at. It was perfectly overwhelm-

* Never finished.—Ed.

ing. But if I could have partaken it with anybody who would have felt it as you would have done, it would have had quite another aspect; or would at least, like a "classic mask" (oh d—— that word!) have had one funny side to relieve its dismal features.

Supposing fifty families were to emigrate into the wilds of North America—yours, mine, and forty-eight others—picked for their concurrence of opinion on all important subjects and for their resolution to found a colony of common-sense, how soon would that devil, Cant, present itself among them in one shape or other? The day they landed do you say, or the day after?

That is a great mistake (almost the only one I know) in the "Arabian Nights," when the Princess restores people to their original beauty by sprinkling them with the golden water. It is quite clear that she must have made monsters of them by such a christening as that.—My dear Jerrold, Faithfully your Friend.

To David Dickson.

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate,
Regent's Park, *Tenth May*, 1843.

Sir—Permit me to say, in reply to your letter, that you do not understand the intention (I dare say the fault is mine) of that passage in the "Pickwick Papers" which has given you offence. The design of "the Shepherd" and of this and every other allusion to him is, to show how sacred things are degraded, vulgarised, and rendered absurd when persons who are utterly incompetent to teach the commonest things take upon themselves to expound such mysteries, and how, in making mere cant phrases of divine words, these persons miss the spirit in which they had their origin. I have seen a great deal of this sort of thing in many parts of England, and I never knew it lead to charity or good deeds.

Whether the great Creator of the world and the creature of his hands, moulded in his own image, be quite so opposite in character as you believe, is a question which it would profit us little to discuss. I like the frankness and candour of your letter, and thank you for it. That every man who seeks heaven must be born again, in good thoughts of his Maker, I sincerely believe. That it is ex-

pedient for every hound to say so in a snuffling form of words, to which he attaches no good meaning, I do not believe. I take it there is no difference between us.

Faithfully yours.

To Professor Felton.

Broadstairs, Kent, *First September*, 1843.

My dear Felton—If I thought it in the nature of things that you and I could ever agree on paper, touching a certain Chuzzlewitian question whereupon Forster tells me you have remarks to make, I should immediately walk into the same, tooth and nail. But as I don't, I won't. Contenting myself with this prediction, that one of these years and days, you will write or say to me: "My dear Dickens, you were right, though rough, and did a world of good, though you got most thoroughly hated for it." To which I shall reply: "My dear Felton, I looked a long way off and not immediately under my nose." . . . At which sentiment you will laugh, and I shall laugh; and then (for I foresee this will all happen in my land) we shall call for another pot of porter and two or three dozen of oysters.

Now, don't you in your own heart and soul quarrel with me for this long silence? Not half so much as I quarrel with myself, I know; but if you could read half the letters I write to you in imagination, you would swear by me for the best of correspondents. The truth is, that when I have done my morning's work, down goes my pen, and from that minute I feel it a positive impossibility to take it up again, until imaginary butchers and bakers wave me to my desk. I walk about brimful of letters, facetious descriptions, touching morsels, and pathetic friendships, but can't for the soul of me uncork myself. The post-office is my rock ahead. My average number of letters that *must* be written every day is, at the least, a dozen. And you could no more know what I was writing to you spiritually, from the perusal of the bodily thirteenth, than you could tell from my hat what was going on in my head, or could read my heart on the surface of my flannel waistcoat.

This is a little fishing-place; intensely quiet; built on a cliff, whereon—in the centre of a tiny semicircular bay

—our house stands; the sea rolling and dashing under the windows. Seven miles out are the Goodwin Sands (you've heard of the Goodwin Sands?) whence floating lights perpetually wink after dark, as if they were carrying on intrigues with the servants. Also there is a big lighthouse called the North Foreland on a hill behind the village, a severe parsonic light, which reproves the young and giddy floaters, and stares grimly out upon the sea. Under the cliff are rare good sands, where all the children assemble every morning and throw up impossible fortifications, which the sea throws down again at high water. Old gentlemen and ancient ladies flirt after their own manner in two reading-rooms and on a great many scattered seats in the open air. Other old gentlemen look all day through telescopes and never see anything. In a bay window in a one-pair sits, from nine o'clock to one, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz. At one he disappears, and presently emerges from a bathing-machine, and may be seen—a kind of salmon-coloured porpoise—splashing about in the ocean. After that he may be seen in another bay window on the ground floor, eating a strong lunch; after that, walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back in the sand reading a book. Nobody bothers him unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable indeed. He's as brown as a berry, and they *do* say is a small fortune to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch. But this is mere rumour. Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles or so, away), and then I am told there is a sound in Lincoln's Inn Fields at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wine-glasses.

I never shall have been so near you since we parted aboard the George Washington as next Tuesday. Forster, Maclise, and I, and perhaps Stanfield, are then going aboard the Cunard steamer at Liverpool, to bid Macready good-bye, and bring his wife away. It will be a very hard parting. You will see and know him of course. We gave him a splendid dinner last Saturday at Richmond, whereat I presided with my accustomed grace. He is one of the noblest fellows in the world, and I would

give a great deal that you and I should sit beside each other to see him play Virginius, Lear, or Werner, which I take to be, every way, the greatest piece of exquisite perfection that his lofty art is capable of attaining. His Macbeth, especially the last act, is a tremendous reality; but so indeed is almost everything he does. You recollect, perhaps, that he was the guardian of our children while we were away. I love him dearly. . . .

You asked me, long ago, about Maclise. He is such a wayward fellow in his subjects, that it would be next to impossible to write such an article as you were thinking of about him. I wish you could form an idea of his genius. One of these days a book will come out, Moore's "Irish Melodies," entirely illustrated by him, on every page. *When* it comes, I'll send it to you. You will have some notion of him then. He is in great favour with the Queen, and paints secret pictures for her to put upon her husband's table on the morning of his birthday, and the like. But if he has a care, he will leave his mark on more enduring things than palace walls.

And so Longfellow is married. I remember *her* well, and could draw her portrait, in words, to the life. A very beautiful and gentle creature, and a proper love for a poet. My cordial remembrances, and congratulations. Do they live in the house where we breakfasted? . . .

I very often dream I am in America again; but, strange to say, I never dream of you. I am always endeavouring to get home in disguise, and have a dreary sense of the distance. Apropos of dreams, is it not a strange thing if writers of fiction never dream of their own creations; recollecting, I suppose, even in their dreams, that they have no real existence? *I* never dream of any of my own characters, and I feel it so impossible that I would wager Scott never did of his, real as they are. I had a good piece of absurdity in my head a night or two ago. I dreamed that somebody was dead. I don't know who, but it's not to the purpose. It was a private gentleman, and a particular friend; and I was greatly overcome when the news was broken to me (very delicately) by a gentleman in a cocked hat, top-boots, and a sheet. Nothing else. "Good God!" I said, "is he dead?" "He is as dead, sir," rejoined the gentleman, "as a door-nail. But we must all die, Mr. Dickens, sooner of later, my

dear sir." "Ah!" I said. "Yes, to be sure. Very true. But what did he die of?" The gentleman burst into a flood of tears, and said, in a voice broken by emotion: "He christened his youngest child, sir, with a toasting-fork." I never in my life was so affected as at his having fallen a victim to this complaint. It carried a conviction to my mind that he never could have recovered. I knew that it was the most interesting and fatal malady in the world; and I wrung the gentleman's hand in a convulsion of respectful admiration, for I felt that this explanation did equal honour to his head and heart.

What do you think of Mrs. Gamp? And how do you like the undertaker? I have a fancy that they are in your way. Oh heaven! such green woods as I was rambling among, down in Yorkshire, when I was getting that done last July! For days and weeks we never saw the sky but through green boughs; and all day long I cantered over such soft moss and turf, that the horse's feet scarcely made a sound upon it. We have some friends in that part of the country (close to Castle Howard, where Lord Morpeth's father dwells in state, *in* his park indeed), who are the jolliest of the jolly, keeping a big old country house, with an ale cellar something larger than a reasonable church, and everything, like Goldsmith's bear-dances, "in a concatenation accordingly." Just the place for you, Felton! We performed some madnesses there in the way of forfeits, picnics, rustic games, inspections of ancient monasteries at midnight, when the moon was shining, that would have gone to your heart, and, as Mr. Weller says, "come out on the other side." . . .

Write soon, my dear Felton; and if I write to you less often than I would, believe that my affectionate heart is with you always. Loves and regards to all friends, from yours ever and ever. Very faithfully yours.

To Professor Felton.

Devonshire Terrace, London,
Second January, 1844.

My very dear Felton—You are a prophet, and had best retire from business straightway. Yesterday morning, New Year's Day, when I walked into my little work-

room after breakfast, and was looking out of window at the snow in the garden—not seeing it particularly well in consequence of some staggering suggestions of last night, whereby I was beset—the postman came to the door with a knock, for which I denounced him from my heart. Seeing your hand upon the cover of a letter which he brought, I immediately blessed him, presented him with a glass of whisky, inquired after his family (they are all well), and opened the dispatch with a moist and oystery twinkle in my eye. And on the very day from which the new year dates, I read your New Year congratulations as punctually as if you lived in the next house! Why don't you?

Now, if instantly on the receipt of this you will send a free and independent citizen down to the Cunard wharf at Boston, you will find that Captain Hewett, of the Britannia steamship (my ship), has a small parcel for Professor Felton of Cambridge; and in that parcel you will find "A Christmas Carol in Prose; being a Ghost Story of Christmas by Charles Dickens." Over which "Christmas Carol" Charles Dickens wept and laughed and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner in the composition; and thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London, fifteen and twenty miles many a night when all the sober folks had gone to bed. . . . Its success is most prodigious. And by every post all manner of strangers write all manner of letters to him about their homes and hearths, and how this same "Carol" is read aloud there, and kept on a little shelf by itself. Indeed, it is the greatest success, as I am told, that this ruffian and rascal has ever achieved.

Forster is out again; and if he don't go in again, after the manner in which we have been keeping Christmas, he must be very strong indeed. Such dinings, such dancings, such conjurings, such blindman's-buffings, such theatre-goings, such kissings-out of old years and kissings-in of new ones, never took place in these parts before. To keep the "Chuzzlewit" going, and do this little book, the "Carol," in the odd times between two parts of it, was, as you may suppose, pretty tight work. But when it was done I broke out like a madman. And if you could have seen me at a children's party at Macready's the other night, going down a country dance with Mrs.

M., you would have thought I was a country gentleman of independent property, residing on a tiptop farm, with the wind blowing straight in my face every day. . . .

Your friend, Mr. P——, dined with us one day (I don't know whether I told you this before), and pleased us very much. Mr. C—— has dined here once, and spent an evening here. I have not seen him lately, though he has called twice or thrice; for Kate being unwell and I busy, we have not been visible at our accustomed seasons. I wonder whether Putnam has fallen in your way. Poor Putnam! He was a good fellow, and has the most grateful heart I ever met with. Our journeyings seem to be a dream now. Talking of dreams, strange thoughts of Italy and France, and maybe Germany, are springing up within me as the "Chuzzlewit" clears off. It's a secret I have hardly breathed to any one, but I "think" of leaving England for a year, next midsummer, bag and baggage, little ones and all—then coming out with *such* a story, Felton, all at once, no parts, sledge-hammer blow.

I send you a Manchester paper, as you desire. The report is not exactly done, but very well done, notwithstanding. It was a very splendid sight, I assure you, and an awful-looking audience. I am going to preside at a similar meeting at Liverpool on the twenty-sixth of next month, and on my way home I may be obliged to preside at another at Birmingham. I will send you papers, if the reports be at all like the real thing.

I wrote to Prescott about his book, with which I was perfectly charmed. I think his descriptions masterly, his style brilliant, his purpose manly and gallant always. The introductory account of Aztec civilization impressed me exactly as it impressed you. From beginning to end the whole history is enchanting and full of genius. I only wonder that, having such an opportunity of illustrating the doctrine of visible judgments, he never remarks, when Cortes and his men tumble the idols down the temple steps and call upon the people below to take notice that their gods are powerless to help themselves, that possibly, if some intelligent native had tumbled down the image of the Virgin or patron saint after them, nothing very remarkable might have ensued in consequence.

Of course you like Macready. Your name's Felton. I wish you could see him play Lear. It is stupendously

terrible. But I suppose he would be slow to act it with the Boston company.

Hearty remembrances to Sumner, Longfellow, Prescott, and all whom you know I love to remember. Countless happy years to you and yours, my dear Felton, and some instalment of them, however slight, in England, in the loving company of THE PROSCRIBED ONE.

Oh, breathe not his name!

To W. C. Macready.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, *Third January*, 1844.

MY VERY DEAR MACREADY—You know all the news, and you know I love you; so I no more know why I write than I do why I "come round" after the play to shake hands with you in your dressing-room. I say come, as if you were at this present moment the lessee of Drury Lane, and had —— with a long face on one hand, —— elaborately explaining that everything in creation is a joint-stock company on the other, the inimitable B. by the fire, in conversation with ——. Well-a-day! I see it all, and smell that extraordinary compound of odd scents peculiar to a theatre, which bursts upon me when I swing open the little door in the hall, accompanies me as I meet perspiring supers in the narrow passage, goes with me up the two steps, crosses the stage, winds round the third entrance P.S. as I wind, and escorts me safely into your presence, where I find you uuwinding something slowly round and round your chest, which is so long that no man can see the end of it.

Oh that you had been at Clarence-Terrace on Nina's birthday! Good God, how we missed you, talked of you, drank your health, and wondered what you were doing! Perhaps you are Falkland enough (I swear I suspect you of it) to feel rather sore—just a little bit, you know, the merest trifle in the world—on hearing that Mrs. Macready looked brilliant, blooming, young, and handsome, and that she danced a country dance with the writer hereof (Acres to your Falkland) in a thorough spirit of becoming good humour and enjoyment. Now you don't like to be told that? Nor do you quite like to hear that Forster and I conjured bravely; that a plum-pudding was produced from an empty saucepan, held over a blazing fire

kindled in Stanfield's hat without damage to the lining; that a box of bran was changed into a live guinea-pig, which ran between my godchild's feet, and was the cause of such a shrill uproar and clapping of hands that you might have heard it (and I dare say did) in America; that three half-crowns being taken from Major Burns and put into a tumbler-glass before his eyes, did then and there give jingling answers to the questions asked of them by me, and knew where you were and what you were doing, to the unspeakable admiration of the whole assembly. Neither do you quite like to be told that we are going to do it again next Saturday, with the addition of demoniacal dresses from the masquerade shop; nor that Mrs. Macready, for her gallant bearing always, and her best sort of best affection, is the best creature I know. Never mind; no man shall gag me, and these are my opinions.

My dear Macready, the lecturing proposition is not to be thought of. I have not the slightest doubt or hesitation in giving you my most strenuous and decided advice against it. Looking only to its effect at home, I am immovable in my conviction that the impression it would produce would be one of failure, and reduction of yourself to the level of those who do the like here. To us who know the Boston names and honour them, and who know Boston and like it (Boston is what I would have the whole United States to be), the Boston requisition would be a valuable document, of which you and your friends might be proud. But those names are perfectly unknown to the public here, and would produce not the least effect. The only thing known to the public here is, that they ask (when I say "they" I mean the people) everybody to lecture. It is one of the things I have ridiculed in "Chuzzlewit." Lecture you, and you fall into the roll of Lardners, Vandenhoffs, Eltons, Knowleses, Buckinghams. You are off your pedestal, have flung away your glass slipper, and changed your triumphal coach into a seedy old pumpkin. I am quite sure of it, and cannot express my strong conviction in language of sufficient force.

"Puff-ridden!" why to be sure they are. The nation is a miserable Sindbad, and its boasted press the loathsome, foul old man upon his back, and yet they will tell

you, and proclaim to the four winds for repetition here, that they don't need their ignorant and brutal papers, as if the papers could exist if they didn't need them! Let any two of these vagabonds, in any town you go to, take it into their heads to make you an object of attack, or to direct the general attention elsewhere, and what avail those wonderful images of passion which you have been all your life perfecting!

I have sent you, to the charge of our trusty and well-beloved Colden, a little book I published on the 17th of December, and which has been a most prodigious success—the greatest, I think, I have ever achieved. It pleases me to think that it will bring you home for an hour or two, and I long to hear you have read it on some quiet morning. Do they allow you to be quiet, by-the-way? "Some of our most fashionable people, sir," denounced me awfully for liking to be alone sometimes.

Now that we have turned Christmas, I feel as if your face were directed homewards, Macready. The down-hill part of the road is before us now, and we shall travel on to midsummer at a dashing pace; and, please Heaven, I will be at Liverpool when you come steaming up the Mersey, with that red funnel smoking out unutterable things, and your heart much fuller than your trunks, though something lighter! If I be not the first Englishman to shake hands with you on English ground, the man who gets before me will be a brisk and active fellow, and even then need put his best leg foremost. So I warn Forster to keep in the rear, or he'll he blown.

If you shall have any leisure to project and put on paper the outline of a scheme for opening any theatre on your return, upon a certain list subscribed, and on certain understandings with the actors, it strikes me that it would be wise to break ground while you are still away. Of course I need not say that I will see anybody or do anything—even to the calling together of the actors—if you should ever deem it desirable. My opinion is that our respected and valued friend Mr.. —— will stagger through another season if he don't rot first. I understand he is in a partial state of decomposition at this minute. He was very ill, but got better. How is it that —— always do get better, and strong hearts are so easy to die?

Look homeward always, as we look abroad to you. God bless you, my dear Macready.

Ever your affectionate Friend.

To T. J. Thompson.

Liverpool, *Wednesday Night, Twenty-eighth February, Half-past Ten at Night.*

My dear Thompson—There never were such considerate people as they are here. After offering me unbounded hospitality and my declining it, they leave me to myself like gentlemen. They saved me from all sorts of intrusion at the Town Hall *—brought me back—and left me to my quiet supper (now on the table) as they had left me to my quiet dinner.

I wish you had come. It was really a splendid sight. The Town Hall was crammed to the roof by, I suppose, two thousand persons. The ladies were in full dress and immense numbers; and when Dick showed himself, the whole assembly stood up, rustling like the leaves of a wood. Dick, with the heart of a lion, dashed in bravely. He introduced that about the genie in the casket with marvellous effect; and was applauded to the echo, which did applaud again. He was horribly nervous when he arrived at Birmingham, but when he stood upon the platform, I don't believe his pulse increased ten degrees. A better and quicker audience never listened to man.

The ladies had hung the hall (do you know what an immense place it is?) with artificial flowers all round. And on the front of the great gallery, immediately fronting this young gentleman, were the words in artificial flowers (you'll observe), "Welcome Boz," in letters about six feet high. Behind his head, and about the great organ, were immense transparencies representing several Fames crowning a corresponding number of Dicks, at which Victoria (taking out a poetic licence) was highly delighted.

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* On the 26th of February Dickens took the chair and made a speech on education at a soirée of the Mechanics' Institution at Liverpool.—Ed.

I am going to bed. The landlady is not literary, and calls me Mr. Digzon. In other respects it is a good house.

My dear Thompson, always yours.

To Daniel Maclise, R.A.

Villa di Bagnarello, Albaro,
Monday, Twenty-second July, 1844.

My very dear Mac—I address you with something of the lofty spirit of an exile—a banished commoner—a sort of Anglo-Pole. I don't exactly know what I have done for my country in coming away from it; but I feel it is something—something great—something virtuous and heroic. Lofty emotions rise within me, when I see the sun set on the blue Mediterranean. I am the limpet on the rock. My father's name is Turner, and my boots are green.

Apropos of blue. In a certain picture, called "The Serenade," you painted a sky. If you ever have occasion to paint the Mediterranean, let it be exactly of that colour. It lies before me now, as deeply and intensely blue. But no such colour is above me. Nothing like it. In the South of France—at Avignon, at Aix, at Marseilles—I saw deep blue skies (not *so* deep though—oh Lord, no!), and also in America; but the sky above me is familiar to my sight. Is it heresy to say that I have seen its twin-brother shining through the window of Jack Straw's *—that down in Devonshire I have seen a better sky? I dare say it is; but like a great many other heresies, it is true.

But such green—green—green—as flutters in the vineyard down below the windows, *that* I never saw; nor yet such lilac, and such purple as float between me and the distant hills; nor yet—in anything—picture, book, or verbal boredom—such awful, solemn, impenetrable blue, as is that same sea. It has such an absorbing, silent, deep, profound effect, that I can't help thinking it suggested the idea of Styx. It looks as if a draught of it—only so much as you could scoop up on the beach, in the hollow of your hand—would wash out everything else, and make a great blue blank of your intellect.

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* The Jack Straw's Castle Inn, at Hampstead.—Ed.

When the sun sets clearly, then, by Heaven, it is majestic! From any one of eleven windows here, or from a terrace overgrown with grapes, you may behold the broad sea; villas, houses, mountains, forts, strewn with rose leaves—strewn with thorns—stifled in thorns! Dyed through and through and through. For a moment. No more. The sun is impatient and fierce, like everything else in these parts, and goes down headlong. Run to fetch your hat—and it's night. Wink at the right time of black night—and it's morning. Everything is in extremes. There is an insect here (I forget its name, and Fletcher and Roche are both out) that chirps all day. There is one outside the window now. The chirp is very loud, something like a Brobdingnagian grasshopper. The creature is born to chirp—to progress in chirping—to chirp louder, louder, lounder—till it gives one tremendous chirp, and bursts itself. That is its life and death. Everything "is in a concatenation accordingly." The day gets brighter, brighter, brighter, till it's night. The summer gets hotter, hotter, hotter, till it bursts. The fruit gets riper, riper, riper, till it tumbles down and rots.

Ask me a question or two about fresco—will you be so good? All the houses are painted in fresco hereabout—the outside walls I mean; the fronts, and backs, and sides—and all the colour has run into damp and green seediness, and the very design has struggled away into the component atoms of the plaster. Sometimes (but not often) I can make out a Virgin with a mildewed glory round her head; holding nothing, in an indiscernible lap, with invisible arms; and occasionally the leg or arms of a cherub, but it is very melancholy and dim. There are two old fresco-painted vases outside my own gate—one on either hand—which are so faint, that I never saw them till last night; and only then because I was looking over the wall after a lizard, who had come upon me while I was smoking a cigar above, and crawled over one of these embellishments to his retreat. There is a church here—the Church of the Annunciation—which they are now (by "they" I mean certain noble families) restoring at a vast expense, as a work of piety. It is a large church, with a great many little chapels in it, and a very high dome. Every inch of this edifice is painted, and every design is set in a great gold frame or border elaborately

wrought. You can imagine nothing so splendid. It is worth coming the whole distance to see. But every sort of splendour is in perpetual enactment through the means of these churches. Gorgeous processions in the streets, illuminations of windows on festa-nights; lighting up of lamps and clustering of flowers before the shrines of saints; all manner of show and display. The doors of the churches stand wide open; and in this hot weather great red curtains flutter and wave in their places; and if you go and sit in one of these to get out of the sun, you see the queerest figures kneeling against pillars, and the strangest people passing in and out, and vast streams of women in veils (they don't wear bonnets), with great fans in their hands, coming and going, that you are never tired of looking on. Except in the churches, you would suppose the city (at this time of the year) to be deserted, the people keep so close within doors. Indeed it is next to impossible to get out into the heat. I have only been into Genoa twice myself. We are deliciously cool here, by comparison; being high, and having the sea breeze. There is always some shade in the vineyard, too; and underneath the rocks on the sea-shore, so if I choose to saunter, I can do it easily, even in the hot time of the day. I am as lazy, however, as—as you are, and do little but eat and drink and read.

As I am going to transmit regular accounts of all sight-seeings and journeyings to Forster, who will show them to you, I will not bore you with descriptions, however. I hardly think you allow enough for the great brightness and brilliancy of colour which is commonly achieved on the Continent, in that same fresco painting. I saw some —by a French artist and his pupil—in progress at the cathedral at Avignon, which was as bright and airy as anything can be—nothing dull or dead about it; and I have observed quite fierce and glaring colours elsewhere.

We have a piano now (there was none in the house), and have fallen into a pretty settled easy track. We breakfast about half-past nine or ten, dine about four, and go to bed about eleven. We are much courted by the visiting people, of course, and I very much resort to my old habit of bolting from callers, and leaving their reception to Kate. Green figs I have already learnt to like. Green almonds (we have them at dessert every

day) are the most delicious fruit in the world. And green lemons, combined with some rare hollands that is to be got here, make prodigious punch, I assure you. You ought to come over, Mac; but I don't expect you, though I am sure it would be a very good move for you. I have not the smallest doubt of that. Fletcher has made a sketch of the house, and will copy it in pen-and-ink for transmission to you in my next letter. I shall look out for a place in Genoa, between this and the winter time. In the meantime, the people who come out here breathe delightedly, as if they had got into another climate. Landing in the city, you would hardly suppose it possible that there could be such an air within two miles.

Write to me as often as you can, like a dear good fellow, and rely upon the punctuality of my correspondence. Losing you and Forster is like losing my arms and legs, and dull and lame I am without you. But at Broadstairs next year, please God, when it is all over, I shall be very glad to have laid up such a store of recollections and improvement.

I don't know what to do with Timber. He is as ill-adapted to the climate at this time of year as a suit of fur. I have had him made a lion dog; but the fleas flock in such crowds into the hair he has left, that they drive him nearly frantic, and render it absolutely necessary that he should be kept by himself. Of all the miserable hideous little frights you ever saw, you never beheld such a devil. *Apropos*, as we were crossing the Seine within two stages of Paris, Roche * suddenly said to me, sitting by me on the box: "The littel dog 'ave got a great lip!" I was thinking of things remote and very different, and couldn't comprehend why any peculiarity in this feature on the part of the dog should excite a man so much. As I was musing upon it, my ears were attracted by shouts of "Hélo! holà! Hi, hi, hi! Le voilà! Regardez!" and the like. And looking down among the oxen—we were in the centre of a numerous drove—I saw him, Timber, lying in the road, curled up—you know his way—like a lobster, only not so stiff, yelping dismally in the pain of his "lip" from the roof of the carriage; and between the aching of his bones, his horror of the oxen, and his dread of me

* Dickens's courier in Italy, etc.—Ed.

(who he evidently took to be the immediate agent in and cause of the damage), singing out to an extent which I believe to be perfectly unprecedented; while every Frenchman and French boy within sight roared for company. He wasn't hurt.

Kate and Georgina send their best loves; and the children add "theirs." Katey, in particular, desires to be commended to "Mr. Teese." She has a sore throat; from sitting in constant draughts, I suppose; but with that exception, we are all quite well.—Ever believe me, my dear Mac, Your affectionate Friend.

To Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

Albaro, *Saturday Night, Twenty-fourth August*, 1844.

My dear Stanfield—I love you so truly, and have such pride and joy of heart in your friendship, that I don't know how to begin writing to you. When I think how you are walking up and down London in that portly surtout, and can't receive proposals from Dick to go to the theatre, I fall into a state between laughing and crying, and want some friendly back to smite. "Je-im!" "Aye, aye, your honour," is in my ears every time I walk upon the seashore here; and the number of expeditions I make into Cornwall in my sleep, the springs of Flys I break, the songs I sing, and the bowls of punch I drink, would soften a heart of stone.

We have had weather here, since five o'clock this morning, after your own heart. Suppose yourself the Admiral in "Black-eyed Susan" after the acquittal of William and when it was possible to be on friendly terms with him. I am T.P.* My trousers are very full at the ankles, my black neckerchief is tied in the regular style, the name of my ship is painted round my glazed hat, I have a red waistcoat on, and the seams of my blue jacket are "paid"—permit me to dig you in the ribs when I make use of this nautical expression—with white. In my hand I hold the very box connected with the story of Sandomingerbilly. I lift up my eyebrows as far as I can (on the T.P. model), take a quid from the box, screw

* T. P. Cooke, the celebrated actor of William in Douglas Jerrold's play of "Black-eyed Susan."—Ed.

the lid on again (chewing at the same time, and looking pleasantly at the pit), brush it with my right elbow, take up my right leg, scrape my right foot on the ground, hitch up my trousers, and in reply to a question of yours, namely, "Indeed, what weather, William?" I deliver myself as follows:

Lord love your honour! Weather! Such weather as would set all hands to the pumps aboard one of your fresh-water cockboats, and set the purser to his wits' ends to stow away, for the use of the ship's company, the casks and casks full of blue water as would come pouring in over the gunnel! The dirtiest night, your honour, as ever you see 'atween Spithead at gun-fire and the Bay of Biscay! The wind sou'-west, and your house dead in the wind's eye; the breakers running up high upon the rocky heads, the light'us no more looking through the fog than Davy Jones's sarser eye through the blue sky of heaven in a calm, or the blue toplights of your honour's lady cast down in a modest overhauling of her catheads: avast! (*whistling*) my dear eyes; here am I a-goin' head on to the breakers (*bowing*).

Admiral (*smiling*). No, William! I admire plain-speaking, as you know, and so does old England, William, and old England's Queen. But you were saying——

William. Aye, aye, your honour (*scratching his head*). I've lost my reckoning. Damme!—I ast pardon—but won't your honour throw a hencoop or any old end of towline to a man as is overboard?

Admiral (*smiling still*). You were saying, William, that the wind——

William (*again cocking his leg, and slapping the thighs very hard*). Avast heaving, your honour! I see your honour's signal fluttering in the breeze, without a glass. As I was a-saying, your honour, the wind was blowin' from the sou'-west, due sou'-west, your honour, not a pint to larboard nor a pint to starboard; the clouds a-gatherin' in the distance for all the world like Beachy Head in a fog, the sea a-rowling in, in heaps of foam, and making higher than the mainyard arm, the craft a-scuddin' by all taut and under storm-s'ils for the harbour; not a blessed star a-twinkling out aloft—aloft, your honour, in the little cherubs' native country—and the spray is flying like the white foam from the Jolly's lips when Poll of Portsea took him for a tailor! (*laughs*).

Admiral (*laughing also*). You have described it well, William, and I thank you. But who are these?

Enter Supers in calico jackets to look like cloth, some in brown holland petticoat-trousers and big boots, all with very large buckles. Last Super rolls on a cask, and pretends to keep it. Other Supers apply their mugs to the bunghole and drink, previously holding them upside down.

William (*after shaking hands with everybody*). Who are these, your honour! Messmates as staunch and true as ever broke biscuit. Ain't you, my lads?

ALL. Aye, aye, William. That we are! that we are!
ADMIRAL (*much affected*). Oh, England, what wonder that——! But I will no longer detain you from your sports, my humble friends (ADMIRAL *speaks very low, and looks hard at the orchestra, this being the cue for the dance*)—from your sports, my humble friends. Farewell!
ALL. Hurrah! hurrah! [*Exit* ADMIRAL.
VOICE BEHIND. Suppose the dance, Mr. Stanfield. Are you all ready? Go, then!

My dear Stanfield, I wish you would come this way and see me in that Palazzo Peschiere! Was ever man so welcome as I would make you! What a truly gentlemanly action it would be to bring Mrs. Stanfield and the baby. And how Kate and her sister would wave pocket-handkerchiefs from the wharf in joyful welcome! Ah, what a glorious proceeding!

Do you know this place? Of course you do. I won't bore you with anything about it, for I know Forster reads my letters to you; but what a place it is! The views from the hills here, and the immense variety of prospects of the sea, are as striking, I think, as such scenery can be. Above all, the approach to Genoa, by sea from Marseilles, constitutes a picture which you ought to paint, for nobody else can ever do it! William, you made that bridge at Avignon better than it is. Beautiful as it undoubtedly is, you made it fifty times better. And if I were Morrison, or one of that school (bless the dear fellows one and all!), I wouldn't stand it, but would insist on having another picture gratis, to atone for the imposition.

The night is like a seaside night in England towards the end of September. They say it is the prelude to clear weather. But the wind is roaring now, and the sea is raving, and the rain is driving down, as if they had all set in for a real hearty picnic, and each had brought its own relations to the general festivity. I don't know whether you are acquainted with the coastguard men in these parts? They are extremely civil fellows, of a very amiable manner and appearance, but the most innocent men in matters you would suppose them to be well acquainted with, in virtue of their office, that I ever encountered. One of them asked me only yesterday, if it would take a year to get to England in a ship? Which I thought for a coastguardman was rather a tidy question. It would take a long time to catch a ship going there if

he were on board a pursuing cutter though. I think he would scarcely do it in twelve months, indeed.

So you were at Astley's t'other night. "Now, Mr. Stickney, sir, what can I come for to go for to do for to bring for to fetch for to carry for you, sir?" "He, he, he! Oh, I say, sir!" "Well, sir?" "Miss Woolford knows me, sir. She laughed at me!" I see him run away after this; not on his feet, but on his knees and the calves of his legs alternately; and that smell of sawdusty horses, which was never in any other place in the world, salutes my nose with painful distinctness. What do you think of my suddenly finding myself a swimmer? But I have really made the discovery, and skim about a little blue bay just below the town here, like a fish in high spirits. I hope to preserve my bathing-dress for your inspection and approval, or possibly to enrich your collection of Italian costumes on my return. Do you recollect Yarnold in "Masaniello"? I fear that I, unintentionally, "dress at him," before plunging into the sea. I enhanced the likeness very much, last Friday morning, by singing a barcarole on the rocks. I was a trifle too flesh-coloured (the stage knowing no medium between bright salmon and dirty yellow), but apart from that defect, not badly made up by any means. I remain out here until the end of September, and send in for my letters daily. There is a postman for this place, but he gets drunk and loses the letters; after which he calls to say so, and to fall upon his knees. About three weeks ago I caught him at a wineshop near here, playing bowls in the garden. It was then about five o'clock in the afternoon, and he had been airing a newspaper addressed to me, since nine o'clock in the morning.

Kate and Georgina unite with me in most cordial remembrances to Mrs. and Miss Stanfield, and to all the children. They particularise all sorts of messages, but I tell them that they had better write themselves if they want to send any. Though I don't know that this writing would end in the safe deliverance of the commodities after all; for when I began this letter, I meant to give utterance to all kinds of heartiness, my dear Stanfield; and I come to the end of it without having said anything more than that I am—which is new to you—under every circumstance and everywhere, Your most affectionate friend.

To Mrs. Charles Dickens.

Parma, Albergo della Posta,
Friday, Eighth November, 1844.

My dearest Kate—"If missis could see us to-night, what would she say?" That was the brave C.'s * remark last night at midnight, and he had reason. We left Genoa, as you know, soon after five on the evening of my departure; and in company with the lady whom you saw, and the dog whom I don't think you did see, travelled all night at the rate of four miles an hour over bad roads without the least refreshment until daybreak, when the brave and myself escaped into a miserable café while they were changing horses, and got a cup of that drink hot. That same day, a few hours afterwards, between ten and eleven, we came to (I hope) the worst inn in the world, where, in a vast chamber, rendered still more desolate by the presence of a most offensive specimen of what D'Israeli calls the Mosaic Arab (who had a beautiful girl with him), I regaled upon a breakfast, almost as cold, and damp, and cheerless as myself. Then, in another coach, much smaller than a small fly, I was packed up with an old padre, a young Jesuit, a provincial avvocato, a private gentleman with a very red nose and a very wet brown umbrella, and the brave C., and I went on again at the same pace through the mud and rain until four in the afternoon, when there was a place in the coupé (two indeed), which I took, holding that select compartment in company with a very ugly but very agreeable Tuscan "gent," who said "*gia*" instead of "*si*," and rung some other changes in this changing language, but with whom I got on very well, being extremely conversational. We were bound, as you know, perhaps, for Piacenza, but it was discovered that we couldn't get to Piacenza, and about ten o'clock at night we halted at a place called Stradella, where the inn was a series of queer galleries open to the night, with a great courtyard full of waggons and horses, and "*velociferi*," and what not in the centre. It was bitter cold and very wet, and we all walked into a bare room (mine!), with two immensely broad beds on two deal dining-tables, a

* "The Brave C." was Roche, the courier.—Ed.

third great empty table, the usual washing-stand tripod, with a slop-basin on it, and two chairs. And then we walked up and down for three-quarters of an hour or so, while dinner, or supper, or whatever it was, was getting ready. This was set forth (by way of variety) in the old priest's bedroom, which had two more immensely broad beds on two more deal dining-tables in it. The first dish was a cabbage boiled in a great quantity of rice and hot water, the whole flavoured with cheese. I was so cold that I thought it comfortable, and so hungry that a bit of cabbage, when I found such a thing floating my way, charmed me. After that we had a dish of very little pieces of pork, fried with pig's kidneys; after that a fowl; after that something very red and stringy, which I think was veal; and after that two tiny little new-born-baby-looking turkeys, very red and very swollen. Fruit, of course, to wind up, and garlic in one shape or another in every course. I made three jokes at supper (to the immense delight of the company), and retired early. The brave brought in a bush or two and made a fire, and after that a glass of screeching hot brandy and water; that bottle of his being full of brandy. I drank it at my leisure, undressed before the fire, and went into one of the beds. The brave reappeared about an hour afterwards and went into the other; previously tying a pocket-handkerchief round and round his head in a strange fashion, and giving utterance to the sentiment with which this letter begins. At five this morning we resumed our journey, still through mud and rain, and at about eleven arrived at Piacenza; where we fellow-passengers took leave of one another in the most affectionate manner. As there was no coach on till six at night, and as it was a very grim despondent sort of place, and as I had had enough of diligences for one while, I posted forward here in the strangest carriages ever beheld, which we changed when we changed horses. We arrived here before six. The hotel is quite French. I have dined very well in my own room on the second floor; and it has two beds in it, screened off from the room by drapery. I only use one to-night, and that is already made.

It is dull work this travelling alone. My only comfort is in motion. I look forward with a sort of shudder to

Sunday, when I shall have a day to myself in Bologna; and I think I must deliver my letters in Venice in sheer desperation. Never did anybody want a companion after dinner so much as I do.

There has been music on the landing outside my door to-night. Two violins and a violoncello. One of the violins played a solo, and the others struck in as an orchestra does now and then, very well. Then he came in with a small tin platter. "Bella musica," said I. "Bellissima musica, signore." "Mi piace moltissimo." "Sono felice, signore," said he. I gave him a franc. "O moltissimo generoso. Tanto generoso, signore."

It was a joke to laugh at when I was learning; but I swear, unless I could stagger on, Zoppa-wise, with the people, I verily believe I should have turned back this morning.

In all other respects I think the entire change has done me undoubted service already. I am free of the book, and am red-faced; and feel marvellously disposed to sleep.

So, for all the straggling qualities of this straggling letter, want of sleep must be responsible. Give my best love to Georgy, and my paternal blessing to

Mamey,
Katey,
Charley,
Wally,
and
Chickenstalker.*

PS.—Get things in their places. I can't bear to picture them otherwise.

PPS.—I think I saw Roche sleeping with his head on the lady's shoulder, in the coach. I couldn't swear it, and the light was deceptive. But I think I did.

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* The names printed in column are those of Dickens's children. "Chickenstalker" is an instance of the eccentric nicknames he was constantly giving to them, and he often used them in his books. —Ed.

To Douglas Jerrold.

Cremona, *Saturday Night, Sixteenth November*, 1844.

My dear Jerrold—As half a loaf is better than no bread, so I hope that half a sheet of paper may be better than none at all, coming from one who is anxious to live in your memory and friendship. I should have redeemed the pledge I gave you in this regard long since, but occupation at one time, and absence from pen and ink at another, have prevented me.

Forster has told you, or will tell you, that I very much wish you to hear my little Christmas book *; and I hope you will meet me, at his bidding, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. I have tried to strike a blow upon that part of the brass countenance of wicked Cant, when such a compliment is sorely needed at this time, and I trust that the result of my training is at least the exhibition of a strong desire to make it a staggerer. If *you* should think at the end of the four rounds (there are no more) that the said Cant, in the language of "Bell's Life," "comes up piping," I shall be very much the better for it.

I am now on my way to Milan; and from thence (after a day or two's rest) I mean to come to England by the grandest Alpine pass that the snow may leave open. You know this place as famous of yore for fiddles. I don't see any here now. But there is a whole street of coppersmiths not far from this inn, and they throb so d——ably and fitfully, that I thought I had a palpitation of the heart after dinner just now, and seldom was more relieved than when I found the noise to be none of mine.

I was rather shocked yesterday (I am not strong in geographical details) to find that Romeo was only banished twenty-five miles. That is the distance between Mantua and Verona. The latter is a quaint old place, with great houses in it that are now solitary and shut up—exactly the place it ought to be. The former has a great many apothecaries in it at this moment, who could play that part to the life. For of all the stagnant ponds I ever beheld, it is the greenest and weediest. I went to see the old palace of the Capulets, which is still distinguished by their cognisance (a hat carved in stone on the courtyard

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The Chimes.—Ed.

wall). It is a miserable inn. The court was full of crazy coaches, carts, geese, and pigs, and was ankle-deep in mud and dung. The garden is walled off and built out. There was nothing to connect it with its old inhabitants, and a very unsentimental lady at the kitchen door. The Montagues used to live some two or three miles off in the country. It does not appear quite clear whether they ever inhabited Verona itself. But there is a village bearing their name to this day, and traditions of the quarrels between the two families are still as nearly alive as anything can be in such a drowsy neighbourhood.

It was very hearty and good of you, Jerrold, to make that affectionate mention of the "Carol" in "Punch," and I assure you it was not lost on the distant object of your manly regard, but touched him as you wished and meant it should. I wish we had not lost so much time in improving our personal knowledge of each other. But I have so steadily read you, and so selfishly gratified myself in always expressing the admiration with which your gallant truths inspired me, that I must not call it time lost, either.

You rather entertained a notion, once, of coming to see me at Genoa. I shall return straight, on the ninth of December, limiting my stay in town to one week. Now couldn't you come back with me? The journey, that way, is very cheap, costing little more than twelve pounds; and I am sure the gratification to you would be high. I am lodged in quite a wonderful place, and would put you in a painted room, as big as a church and much more comfortable. There are pens and ink upon the premises; orange-trees, gardens, battledores and shuttlecocks, rousing wood-fires for evenings, and a welcome worth having.

Come! Letter from a gentleman in Italy to Bradbury and Evans in London. Letter from a gentleman in a country gone to sleep to a gentleman in a country that would go to sleep too, and never wake again, if some people had their way. You can work in Genoa. The house is used to it. It is exactly a week's post. Have that portmanteau looked to, and when we meet, say, "I am coming."

I have never in my life been so struck by any place as by Venice. It is *the* wonder of the world. Dreamy,

beautiful, inconsistent, impossible, wicked, shadowy, d——able old place. I entered it by night, and the sensation of that night and the bright morning that followed is a part of me for the rest of my existence. And, oh God! the cells below the water, underneath the Bridge of Sighs; the nook where the monk came at midnight to confess the political offender; the bench where he was strangled; the deadly little vault in which they tied him in a sack, and the stealthy crouching little door through which they hurried him into a boat, and bore him away to sink him where no fisherman dare cast his net—all shown by torches that blink and wink, as if they were ashamed to look upon the gloomy theatre of sad horrors; past and gone as they are, these things stir a man's blood, like a great wrong or passion of the instant. And with these in their minds, and with a museum there, having a chamber full of such frightful instruments of torture as the devil in a brain fever could scarcely invent, there are hundreds of parrots, who will declaim to you in speech and print, by the hour together, on the degeneracy of the times in which a railroad is building across the water at Venice; instead of going down on their knees, the drivellers, and thanking Heaven that they live in a time when iron makes roads, instead of prison bars and engines for driving screws into the skulls of innocent men. Before God, I could almost turn bloody-minded, and shoot the parrots of our island with as little compunction as Robinson Crusoe shot the parrots in his.

I have not been in bed, these ten days, after five in the morning, and have been travelling many hours every day. If this be the cause of my inflicting a very stupid and sleepy letter on you, my dear Jerrold, I hope it will be a kind of signal at the same time, of my wish to hail you lovingly even from this sleepy and unpromising state.—And believe me as I am,

Always your Friend and Admirer.

To Mrs. Charles Dickens.

Fribourg, *Saturday Night, Twenty-third November*, 1844.

My dearest Kate—For the first time since I left you I am sitting in a room of my own hiring, with a fire and a bed in it. And I am happy to say that I have the best

and fullest intentions of sleeping in the bed, having arrived here at half-past four this afternoon, without any cessation of travelling, night or day, since I parted from Mr. Bairr's cheap firewood.

The Alps appeared in sight very soon after we left Milan —by eight or nine o'clock in the morning; and the brave C. was so far wrong in his calculations that we began the ascent of the Simplon that same night, while you were travelling (as I would I were) towards the Peschiere. Most favourable state of circumstances for journeying up that tremendous pass! The brightest moon I ever saw, all night, and daybreak on the summit. The glory of which, making great wastes of snow a rosy red, exceeds all telling. We *sledged* through the snow on the summit for two hours or so. The weather was perfectly fair and bright, and there was neither difficulty nor danger —except the danger that there always must be, in such a place, of a horse stumbling on the brink of an immeasurable precipice. In which case no piece of the unfortunate traveller would be left large enough to tell his story in dumb show. You may imagine something of the rugged grandeur of such a scene as this great passage of these great mountains, and indeed Glencoe, well sprinkled with snow, would be very like the ascent. But the top itself, so wild, and bleak, and lonely, is a thing by itself, and not to be likened to any other sight. The cold was piercing; the north wind high and boisterous; and when it came driving in our faces, bringing a sharp shower of little points of snow and piercing it into our very blood, it really was, what it is often said to be, "cutting"— with a very sharp edge too. There are houses of refuge here—bleak, solitary places—for travellers overtaken by the snow to hurry to, as an escape from death; and one great house, called the Hospital, kept by monks, where wayfarers get supper and bed for nothing. We saw some coming out and pursuing their journey. If all monks devoted themselves to such uses, I should have little fault to find with them.

The cold in Switzerland, since, has been something quite indescribable. My eyes are tingling to-night as one may suppose cymbals to tingle when they have been lustily played. It is positive pain to me to write. The great organ which I was to have had "pleasure in hearing"

don't play on a Sunday, at which the brave is inconsolable. But the town is picturesque and quaint, and worth seeing. And this inn (with a German bedstead in it about the size and shape of a baby's linen-basket) is perfectly clean and comfortable. Butter is so cheap hereabouts that they bring you a great mass like the squab of a sofa for tea. And of honey, which is most delicious, they set before you a proportionate allowance.

Swiss towns, and mountains, and the Lake of Geneva, and the famous suspension bridge at this place, and a great many other objects (with a very low thermometer conspicuous among them), are dancing up and down me, strangely. But I am quite collected enough, notwithstanding, to have still a very distinct idea that this hornpipe travelling is uncomfortable, and that I would gladly start for my palazzo out of hand without any previous rest, stupid as I am and much as I want it.—Ever, my dear love, Affectionately yours.

To Mrs. Charles Dickens.

Piazza Coffee House, Covent Garden,
Monday, Second December, 1844.

My dearest Kate—I received, with great delight, your *excellent* letter of this morning. Do not regard this as my answer to it. It is merely to say that I have been at Bradbury and Evans's all day, and have barely time to write more than that I *will* write to-morrow. I arrived about seven on Saturday evening, and rushed into the arms of Mac and Forster. Both of them send their best love to you and Georgy, with a heartiness not to be described.

The little book is now, as far as I am concerned, all ready. One cut of Doyle's and one of Leech's I found so unlike my ideas, that I had them both to breakfast with me this morning, and with that winning manner which you know of, got them with the highest good humour to do both afresh. They are now hard at it. Stanfield's readiness, delight, wonder at my being pleased with what he has done is delicious. Mac's frontispiece is charming. The book ["The Chimes"] is quite splendid.

Anybody who has heard it has been moved in the most extraordinary manner. Forster read it (for dramatic

purposes) to A'Beckett. He cried so much and so painfully, that Forster didn't know whether to go on or stop; and he called next day to say that any expression of his feeling was beyond his power. But that he believed it, and felt it to be—I won't say what.

Yours, with true affection.

P.S.—If you had seen Macready last night, undisguisedly sobbing and crying on the sofa as I read, you would have felt, as I did, what a thing it is to have power.

To Thomas Mitton.

Naples, *Monday, Seventeenth February*, 1845.

My dear Mitton—This will be a hasty letter, for I am as badly off in this place as in America—beset by visitors at all times and seasons, and forced to dine out every day. I have found, however, an excellent man for me—an Englishman, who has lived here many years and is well acquainted with *the people*, whom he doctored in the bad time of the cholera, when the priests and everybody else fled in terror.

Under his auspices I have got to understand the low life of Naples (among the fishermen and idlers) almost as well as I understand the do. do. of my own country; always excepting the language, which is very peculiar and extremely difficult, and would require a year's constant practice at least. It is no more like Italian than English is to Welsh. And as they don't say half of what they mean, but make a wink or a kick stand for a whole sentence, it's a marvel to me how they comprehend each other. At Rome they speak beautiful Italian (I am pretty strong at that, I believe); but they are worse here than in Genoa, which I had previously thought impossible.

It is a fine place, but nothing like so beautiful as people make it out to be. The famous bay is, to my thinking, as a piece of scenery, immeasurably inferior to the Bay of Genoa, which is the most lovely thing I have ever seen. The city, in like manner, will bear no comparison with Genoa. But there is none in Italy that will, except Venice. As to houses, there is no palace like the Peschiere for architecture, situation, gardens, or rooms. It is a great triumph to me, too, to find how cheap it is. At

Rome, the English people live in dirty little fourth, fifth, and sixth floors, with not one room as large as your own drawing-room, and pay, commonly, seven or eight pounds a week.

I was a week in Rome on my way here, and saw the Carnival, which is perfectly delirious, and a great scene for a description. All the ancient part of Rome is wonderful and impressive in the extreme, far beyond the possibility of exaggeration. As to the modern part, it might be anywhere or anything—Paris, Nice, Boulogne, Calais, or one of a thousand other places.

The weather is so atrocious (rain, snow, wind, darkness, hail, and cold) that I can't get over into Sicily. But I don't care very much about it, as I have planned out ten days of excursion into the neighbouring country. One thing of course—the ascent of Vesuvius. Herculaneum and Pompeii are more full of interest and wonder than it is possible to imagine. I have heard of some ancient tombs (quite unknown to travellers) dug in the bowels of the earth, and extending for some miles underground. They are near a place called Viterbo, on the way from Rome to Florence. I shall lay in a small stock of torches, etc., and explore them when I leave Rome. I return there on the first of March, and shall stay there nearly a month.

Saturday, February 22nd.—Since I left off as above, I have been away on an excursion of three days. Yesterday evening, at four o'clock, we began (a small party of six) the ascent of Mount Vesuvius, with six saddle-horses, an armed soldier for a guard, and twenty-two guides; the latter rendered necessary by the severity of the weather, which is greater than has been known for twenty years, and has covered the precipitous part of the mountain with deep snow, the surface of which is glazed with one smooth sheet of ice from the top of the cone to the bottom. By starting at that hour I intended to catch the sunset about halfway up, and night at the top, where the fire is raging. It was an inexpressibly lovely night without a cloud; and when the day was quite gone, the moon (within a few hours of the full) came proudly up, showing the sea, and the Bay of Naples, and the whole country in such majesty as no words can express. We rode to the beginning of the snow and then dismounted.

Catherine and Georgina were put into two litters, just chairs with poles, like those in use in England on the 5th of November; and a fat Englishman, who was of the party, was hoisted into a third borne by eight men. I was accommodated with a tough stick, and we began to plough our way up. The ascent as steep as this line / — very nearly perpendicular. We were all tumbling at every step; and looking up and seeing the people in advance tumbling over one's very head, and looking down and seeing hundreds of feet of smooth ice below, was, I must confess, anything but agreeable. However, I knew there was little chance of another clear night before I leave this, and gave the word to get up somehow or other. So on we went, winding a little now and then, or we should not have got on at all. By prodigious exertions we passed the region of snow and came into that of fire —desolate and awful you may well suppose. It was like working one's way through a dry waterfall, with every mass of stone burnt and charred into enormous cinders, and smoke and sulphur bursting out of every chink and crevice, so that it was difficult to breathe. High before us, bursting out of a hill at the top of the mountain, shaped like this **A**, the fire was pouring out, reddening the night with flames, blackening it with smoke, and spotting it with red-hot stones and cinders that fell down again in showers. At every step everybody fell, now into a hot chink, now into a bed of ashes, now over a mass of cindered iron; and the confusion in the darkness (for the smoke obscured the moon in this part), and the quarrelling and shouting and roaring of the guides, and the waiting every now and then for somebody who was not to be found, and was supposed to have stumbled into some pit or other, made such a scene of it as I can give you no idea of. My ladies were now on foot, of course; but we dragged them on as well as we could (they were thorough game, and didn't make the least complaint), until we got to the foot of that topmost hill I have drawn so beautifully. Here we all stopped; but the head guide, an English gentleman of the name of Le Gros—who has been here many years, and has been up the mountain a hundred times—and your humble servant, resolved (like jackasses) to climb that hill to the brink and look into the crater itself. You may form some notion of what is

going on inside it, when I tell you that it is a hundred feet higher than it was six weeks ago. The sensation of struggling up it, choked with the fire and smoke, and feeling at every step as if the crust of ground between one's feet and the gulf of fire would crumble in and swallow one up (which is the real danger), I shall remember for some little time, I think. But we did it. We looked down into the flaming bowels of the mountain and came back again, alight in half a dozen places, and burnt from head to foot. You never saw such devils. And I never saw anything so awful and terrible.

Roche had been tearing his hair like a madman, and crying that we should all three be killed, which made the rest of the company very comfortable, as you may suppose. But we had some wine in a basket, and all swallowed a little of that and a great deal of sulphur before we began to descend. The usual way, after the fiery part is past—you will understand that to be all the flat top of the mountain, in the centre of which again, rises the little hill I have drawn—is to slide down the ashes, which, slipping from under you, make a gradually increasing ledge under your feet, and prevent your going too fast. But when we came to this steep place last night, we found nothing there but one smooth solid sheet of ice. The only way to get down was for the guides to make a chain, holding by each other's hands, and beat a narrow track in it into the snow below with their sticks. My two unfortunate ladies were taken out of their litters again, with half a dozen men hanging on to each, to prevent their falling forward; and we began to descend this way. It was like a tremendous dream. It was impossible to stand, and the only way to prevent oneself from going sheer down the precipice, every time one fell, was to drive one's stick into one of the holes the guides had made, and hold on by that. Nobody could pick one up, or stop one, or render one the least assistance. Now, conceive my horror, when this Mr. Le Gros I have mentioned, being on one side of Georgina and I on the other, suddenly staggers away from the narrow path on to the smooth ice, gives us a jerk, lets go, and plunges headforemost down the smooth ice into the black night, five hundred feet below! Almost at the same instant, a man far behind, carrying a light basket on his head with some

of our spare cloaks in it, misses his footing and rolls down in another place; and after him, rolling over and over like a black bundle, goes a boy, shrieking as nobody but an Italian can shriek, until the breath is tumbled out of him.

The Englishman is in bed to-day, terribly bruised but without any broken bones. He was insensible at first and a mere heap of rags; but we got him before the fire, in a little hermitage there is halfway down, and he so far recovered as to be able to take some supper, which was waiting for us there. The boy was brought in with his head tied up in a bloody cloth, about half an hour after the rest of us were assembled. And the man who had had the basket was not found when we left the mountain at midnight. What became of the cloaks (mine was among them) I know as little. My ladies' clothes were so torn off their backs that they would not have been decent, if there could have been any thought of such things at such a time. And when we got down to the guides' house, we found a French surgeon (one of another party who had been up before us) lying on a bed in a stable, with God knows what horrible breakage about him, but suffering acutely and looking like death. A pretty unusual trip for a pleasure expedition, I think!

I am rather stiff to-day, but am quite unhurt, except a slight scrape on my right hand. My clothes are burnt to pieces. My ladies are the wonder of Naples, and everybody is open-mouthed. Ever faithfully.

To the Countess of Blessington.

Genoa, *Ninth May*, 1845.

My dear Lady Blessington—Once more in my old quarters, and with rather a tired sole to my foot. from having found such an immense number of different resting-places for it since I went away. I write you my last Italian letter for this bout, designing to leave here, please God, on the ninth of next month, and to be in London again by the end of June. I am looking forward with great delight to the pleasure of seeing you once more, and mean to come to Gore House with such a swoop as shall astonish the poodle, if, after being accustomed to his own size and sense, he retain the power of being astonished at anything in the wide world. You know where

I have been, and every mile of ground I have travelled over, and every object I have seen. It is next to impossible, surely, to exaggerate the interest of Rome; though, I think, it *is* very possible to find the main source of interest in the wrong things. Naples disappointed me greatly. The weather was bad during a great part of my stay there. But if I had not had mud, I should have had dust, and though I had had sun, I must still have had the Lazzaroni. And they are so ragged, so dirty, so abject, so full of degradation, so sunken and steeped in the hopelessness of better things, that they would make heaven uncomfortable, if they could ever get there. I didn't expect to see a handsome city, but I expected something better than that long dull line of squalid houses, which stretches from the Chiaja to the quarter of the Porta Capuana; and while I was quite prepared for a miserable populace, I had some dim belief that there were bright rays among them, and dancing legs, and shining sun-browned faces. Whereas the honest truth is, that connected with Naples itself, I have not one solitary recollection. The country round it charmed me, I need not say. Who can forget Herculaneum and Pompeii?

As to Vesuvius, it burns away in my thoughts, beside the roaring waters of Niagara, and not a splash of the water extinguishes a spark of the fire; but there they go on, tumbling and flaming night and day, each in its fullest glory.

I have seen so many wonders, and each of them has such a voice of its own, that I sit all day long listening to the roar they make as if it were in a sea-shell, and have fallen into an idleness so complete, that I can't rouse myself sufficiently to go to Pisa on the twenty-fifth, when the triennial illumination of the Cathedral and Leaning Tower, and Bridges, and what not, takes place. But I have already been there; and it cannot beat St. Peter's, I suppose. So I don't think I shall pluck myself up by the roots, and go aboard a steamer for Leghorn. Let me thank you heartily for the "Keepsake" and the "Book of Beauty." They reached me a week or two ago. I have been very much struck by two papers in them—one, Landor's "Conversations," among the most charming, profound, and delicate productions I have ever read; the

other, your lines on Byron's room at Venice. I am as sure that you wrote them from your heart, as I am that they found their way immediately to mine.

It delights me to receive such accounts of Maclise's fresco. If he will only give his magnificent genius fair play, there is not enough cant and dulness even in the criticism of art from which Sterne prayed kind heaven to defend him, as the worst of all the cants continually canted in this canting world—to keep the giant down an hour.

Our poor friend, the naval governor,* has lost his wife, I am sorry to hear, since you and I spoke of her pleasant face. Do not let your nieces forget me, if you can help it, and give my love to Count D'Orsay, with many thanks to him for his charming letter. I was greatly amused by his account of ——. There was a cold shade of aristocracy about it, and a dampness of cold water, which entertained me beyond measure. Always faithfully yours.

To W. C. Macready.

Devonshire Terrace,
Friday Evening, Seventeenth October, 1845.

My dear Macready—You once—only once—gave the world assurance of a waistcoat. You wore it, sir, I think, in "Money." It was a remarkable and precious waistcoat, wherein certain broad stripes of blue or purple disported themselves as by a combination of extraordinary circumstances, too happy to occur again. I have seen it on your manly chest in private life. I saw it, sir, I think, the other day in the cold light of morning—with feelings easier to be imagined than described. Mr. Macready, sir, are you a father? If so, lend me that waistcoat for five minutes. I am bidden to a wedding (where fathers are made), and my artist cannot, I find (how should he?), imagine such a waistcoat. Let me show it to him as a sample of my tastes and wishes; and —ha, ha, ha, ha!—eclipse the bridegroom!

I will send a trusty messenger at half-past nine precisely, in the morning. He is sworn to secrecy. He

* Lieut. Tracey, R.N., who was at this time Governor of Tothill Fields Prison.—Ed.

durst not for his life betray us, or swells in ambuscade would have the waistcoat at the cost of his heart's blood. —Thine, THE UNWAISTCOATED ONE.

TO JOHN FORSTER.

LAUSANNE, *Sixth September*, 1846.

The weather obstinately clearing, we started off last Tuesday for the Great St. Bernard, returning here on Friday afternoon. The party consisted of eleven people and two servants—Haldimand, Mr. and Mrs. Cerjat and one daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Watson, two Ladies Taylor, Kate, Georgy, and I. We were wonderfully unanimous and cheerful; went away from here by the steamer; found at its destination a whole omnibus provided by the Brave (who went on in advance everywhere); rode therein to Bex; found two large carriages ready to take us to Martigny; slept there; and proceeded up the mountain on mules next day. Although the St. Bernard convent is, as I dare say you know, the highest inhabited spot but one in the world, the ascent is extremely gradual and uncommonly easy; really presenting no difficulties at all until within the last league, when the ascent, lying through a place called the valley of desolation, is very awful and tremendous, and the road is rendered toilsome by scattered rocks and melting snow. The convent is a most extraordinary place, full of great vaulted passages, divided from each other with iron gratings; and presenting a series of the most astonishing little dormitories, where the windows are so small (on account of the cold and snow), that it is as much as one can do to get one's head out of them. Here we slept: supping, thirty strong, in a rambling room with a great wood-fire in it set apart for that purpose; with a grim monk, in a high black sugar-loaf hat with a great knob at the top of it, carving the dishes. At five o'clock in the morning the chapel bell rang in the dismallest way for matins: and I, lying in bed close to the chapel, and being awakened by the solemn organ and the chaunting, thought for a moment I had died in the night and passed into the unknown world.

I wish to God you could see that place. A great hollow on the top of a range of dreadful mountains, fenced in

by riven rocks of every shape and colour; and in the midst, a black lake, with phantom clouds perpetually stalking over it. Peaks, and points, and plains of eternal ice and snow, bounding the view, and shutting out the world on every side: the lake reflecting nothing: and no human figure in the scene. The air so fine, that it is difficult to breathe without feeling out of breath; and the cold so exquisitely thin and sharp that it is not to be described. Nothing of life or living interest in the picture, but the grey dull walls of the convent. No vegetation of any sort or kind. Nothing growing, nothing stirring. Everything ironbound, and frozen up. Beside the convent, in a little outhouse with a grated iron door which you may unbolt for yourself, are the bodies of people found in the snow who have never been claimed and are withering away—not laid down, or stretched out, but standing up, in corners and against walls; some erect and horribly human, with distinct expressions on the faces; some sunk down on their knees; some dropping over on one side; some tumbled down altogether, and presenting a heap of skulls and fibrous dust. There is no other decay in that atmosphere; and there they remain during the short days and the long nights, the only human company out of doors, withering away by grains, and holding ghastly possession of the mountain where they died.

It is the most distinct and individual place I have seen, even in this transcendant country. But, for the Saint Bernard holy fathers and convent in themselves, I am sorry to say that they are a piece of as sheer humbug as we ever learnt to believe in, in our young days. Trashy French sentiment and the dogs (of which, by the bye, there are only three remaining) have done it all. They are a lazy set of fellows; not over fond of going out themselves; employing servants to clear the road (which has not been important or much used as a pass these hundred years); rich; and driving a good trade in Innkeeping: the convent being a common tavern in everything but the sign. No charge is made for their hospitality, to be sure; but you are shown to a box in the chapel, where everybody puts in more than could, with any show of face, be charged for the entertainment; and from this the establishment derives a right good income. As to the self-sacrifice of living up there, they are

obliged to go there young, it is true, to be inured to the climate: but it is an infinitely more exciting and various life than any other convent can offer; with constant change and company through the whole summer; with a hospital for invalids down in the valley, which affords another change; and with an annual begging-journey to Geneva and this place and all the places round for one brother or other, which affords farther change. The brother who carved at our supper could speak some English, and had just had "Pickwick" given him!—what a humbug he will think me when he tries to understand it! If I had had any other book of mine with me, I would have given it him, that I might have had some chance of being intelligible.*

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To W. C. Macready.

Geneva, *Saturday, Twenty-fourth October*, 1846.

My dear Macready—The welcome sight of your handwriting moves me (though I have nothing to say) to show you mine, and if I could recollect the passage in "Virginius" I would paraphrase it, and say, "Does it seem to tremble, boy? Is it a loving autograph? Does it beam with friendship and affection?" all of which I say, as I write, with—oh Heaven!—such a splendid imitation of you, and finally give you one of those grasps and shakes with which I have seen you make the young Icilius stagger again.

Here I am, running away from a bad headache as Tristram Shandy ran away from death, and lodging for a week in the Hôtel de l'Écu de Genève, wherein there is a large mirror shattered by a cannon-ball in the late revolution. A revolution, whatever its merits, achieved by free spirits, nobly generous and moderate, even in the first transports of victory, elevated by a splendid popular education, and bent on freedom from all tyrants,

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* Later accounts of the hospice of the Great St. Bernard represent it in a much more favorable light than that in which Dickens saw it at a time of decadence from which its recovery has been recorded. The original breed of dogs perished, either, it is said, in an epidemic or an avalanche, leaving but three surviving animals, "which were the progenitors of the present breed."—Ed.

whether their crowns be shaven or golden. The newspapers may tell you what they please. I believe there is no country on earth but Switzerland in which a violent change could have been effected in the Christian spirit shown in this place, or in the same proud, independent gallant style. Not one halfpennyworth of property was lost, stolen, or strayed. Not one atom of party malice survived the smoke of the last gun. Nothing is expressed in the government addresses to the citizens but a regard for the general happiness, and injunctions to forget all animosities; which they are practically obeying at every turn, though the late Government (of whose spirit I had some previous knowledge) did load the guns with such material as should occasion gangrene in the wounds, and though the wounded *do* die, consequently every day, in the hospital, of sores that in themselves were nothing.

You a mountaineer! *You* examine (I have seen you do it) the point of your young son's bâton de montagne before he went up into the snow! And *you* talk of coming to Lausanne in March! Why, Lord love your heart, William Tell, times are changed since you lived at Altorf. There is not a mountain pass open until June. The snow is closing in on all the panorama already. I was at the Great St. Bernard two months ago, and it was bitter cold and frosty then. Do you think I could let you hazard your life by going up any pass worth seeing in bleak March? Never shall it be said that Dickens sacrificed his friend upon the altar of his hospitality! Onward! To Paris! (Cue for band. Dickens points off with truncheon, first entrance P.S. Page delivers gauntlets on one knee. Dickens puts 'em on and gradually falls into a fit of musing. Mrs. Dickens lays her hand upon his shoulder. Business. Procession. Curtain.)

It is a great pleasure to me, my dear Macready, to hear from yourself, as I had previously heard from Forster, that you are so well pleased with "Dombey" which is evidently a great success and a great hit, thank God! I felt that Mrs. Brown was strong, but I was not at all afraid of giving as heavy a blow as I could to a piece of hot iron that lay ready at my hand. For that is my principle always, and I hope to come down with some heavier sledge-hammers than that.

Your most affectionate Friend.

To the Hon. Richard Watson.

Paris, 48 Rue de Courcelles, St. Honoré,
Friday, Twenty-seventh November, 1846.

My dear Watson—We were housed only yesterday. I lose no time in despatching this memorandum of our whereabouts, in order that you may not fail to write me a line before you come to Paris on your way towards England, letting me know on what day we are to expect you to dinner.

We arrived here quite happily and well. I don't mean here, but at the Hôtel Brighton, in Paris, on Friday evening between six and seven o'clock. The agonies of house-hunting were frightfully severe. It was one paroxysm for four mortal days. I am proud to express my belief, that we are lodged at last in the most preposterous house in the world. The like of it cannot, and so far as my knowledge goes does not, exist in any other part of the globe. The bedrooms are like opera-boxes. The dining-rooms, staircases, and passages, quite inexplicable. The dining-room is a sort of cavern, painted (ceiling and all) to represent a grove, with unaccountable bits of looking-glass sticking in among the branches of the trees. There is a gleam of reason in the drawing-room. But it is approached through a series of small chambers, like the joints in a telescope, which are hung with inscrutable drapery. The maddest man in Bedlam, having the materials given him, would be likely to devise such a suite, supposing his case to be hopeless and quite incurable.

Pray tell Mrs. Watson, with my best regards, that the dance of the two sisters in the little Christmas book is being done as an illustration by Maclise; and that Stanfield is doing the battle-ground and the outside of the Nutmeg Grater Inn. Maclise is also drawing some smaller subjects for the little story, and they write me that they hope it will be very pretty, and they think that I shall like it. I shall have been in London before I see you, probably, and I hope the book itself will then be on its road to Lausanne to speak for itself, and to speak a word for me too. I have never left so many friendly and cheerful recollections in any place; and to represent me in my absence, its tone should be very eloquent and affectionate indeed.

Well, if I don't turn up again next summer it shall not be my fault. In the meanwhile, I shall often and often look that way with my mind's eye, and hear the sweet, clear, bell-like voice of —— with the ear of my imagination. In the event of there being any change—but it is not likely—in the appearance of ——'s cravat behind, where it goes up into his head, I mean, and frets against his wig—I hope some one of my English friends will apprise me of it, for the love of the great Saint Bernard.

I have not seen Lord Normanby yet. I have not seen anything up to this time but houses and lodgings. I saw the king the other day coming into Paris. His carriage was surrounded by guards on horseback, and he sat very far back in it, I thought, and drove at a great pace. It was strange to see the préfet of police on horseback some hundreds of yards in advance, looking to the right and left as he rode, like a man who suspected every twig in every tree in the long avenue.

Mrs. Dickens and her sister desire their best regards to be sent to you and their best loves to Mrs. Watson, in which I join, as nearly as I may.—Believe me, with great truth, Very sincerely yours.

To M. de Cerjat.*

Paris, Rue de Courcelles, St. Honoré,
Friday, Twenty-seventh November, 1846.

My dear Cerjat—When we turned out of your view on that disconsolate Monday, when you so kindly took horse and rode forth to say good-bye, we went on in a very dull and drowsy manner, I can assure you. I could have borne a world of punch in the rumble, and been none the worse for it. There was an uncommonly cool inn that night, and quite a monstrous establishment at Auxonne the next night, full of flatulent passages and banging doors. The next night we passed at Montbard, where there is one of the very best little inns in all France. The next at Sens, and so we got here. The roads were bad, but not very for French roads. There was no de-

* An intimate friend of Dickens residing at Lausanne, Switzerland.—Ed.

ficiency of horses anywhere; and after Pontarlier the weather was really not too cold for comfort. They weighed our plate at the frontier custom-house, spoon by spoon, and fork by fork, and we lingered about there, in a thick fog and a hard frost, for three long hours and a half, during which the officials committed all manner of absurdities, and got into all sorts of disputes with my brave courier. This was the only misery we encountered —except leaving Lausanne, and that was enough to last us and *did* last us all the way here. We are living on it now. I felt, myself, much as I should think the murderer felt on that fair morning when, with his gray-haired victim (those unconscious gray hairs, soon to be bedabbled with blood), he went so far towards heaven as the top of that mountain of St. Bernard without one touch of remorse. A weight is on my breast. The only difference between me and the murderer is, that his weight was guilt and mine is regret.

I haven't a word of news to tell you. I shouldn't write at all if I were not the vainest man in the world, impelled by a belief that you will be glad to hear from me, even though you hear no more than that I have nothing to say. "Dombey" is doing wonders. Keeley and his wife are making great preparations for producing the Christmas story, and I have made them (as an old stage-manager) carry out one or two expensive notions of mine about scenery and so forth—in particular a sudden change from the inside of the doctor's house in the midst of the ball to the orchard in the snow—which ought to tell very well. But actors are so bad, in general, and the best are spread over so many theatres, that the "cast" is black despair and moody madness. There is no one to be got for Marion but a certain Miss —— I am afraid—a pupil of Miss Kelly's, who acted in the private theatricals I got up a year ago. Macready took her afterwards to play Virginia to his Virginius, but she made nothing of it, great as the chance was. I have promised to show her what I mean, as near as I can, and if you will look into the English Opera House on the morning of the seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth of next month, between the hours of eleven and four, you will find me in a very hot and dusty condition, playing all the parts of the piece, to the immense diversion of all the actors, actresses, scene-

shifters, carpenters, musicians, chorus people, tailors, dressmakers, scene-painters, and general ragamuffins of the theatre.

Moore, the poet, is very ill—I fear dying. The last time I saw him was immediately before I left London, and I thought him sadly changed and tamed, but not much more so than such a man might be under the heavy hand of time. I believe he suffered severe grief in the death of a son some time ago. The first man I met in Paris was ——, who took hold of me as I was getting into a coach at the door of the hotel. He hadn't a button on his shirt (but I don't think he ever has), and you might have sown what boys call "mustard and cress" in the dust on his coat. There seems reason to fear that the growing dissensions between England and France, and the irritation of the French king, may lead to the withdrawal of the minister on each side of the Channel.

Have you cut down any more trees, played any more rubbers, propounded any more teasers to the players at the game of Yes and No? How is the old horse? How is the gray mare? How is Crab (to whom my respectful compliments)? Have you tried the punch yet; if yes, did it succeed; if no, why not? Is Mrs. Cerjat as happy and as well as I would have her, and all your house ditto ditto? Does Haldimand play whist with any science yet? Ha, ha, ha! the idea of his saying *I* hadn't any! And are those damask-cheeked virgins, the Miss ——, still sleeping on dewy rose leaves near the English church?

Remember me to all your house, and most of all to its other head, with all the regard and earnestness that a "numble individual" (as they always call it in the House of Commons) who once travelled with her in a car over a smooth country may charge you with. I have added two lines to the little Christmas book, that I hope both you and she may not dislike. Haldimand will tell you what they are. Kate and Georgy send their kindest loves. Believe me always, my dear Cerjat, full of cordial and hearty recollections of this past summer and autumn, and your part in my part of them.

Very faithfully your Friend.

To the Rev. Edward Tagart.

Paris, 48 Rue de Courcelles, Honoré,
Thursday, Twenty-eighth January, 1847.

My dear Sir—Before you read any more, I wish you would take those tablets out of your drawer, in which you have put a black mark against my name, and erase it neatly. I don't deserve it, on my word I don't, though appearances are against me, I willingly confess.

I had gone to Geneva, to recover from an uncommon depression of spirits, consequent on too much sitting over "Dombey" and the little Christmas book, when I received your letter as I was going out walking, one sunshiny, windy day. I read it on the banks of the Rhone, where it runs, very blue and swift, between two high green hills, with ranges of snowy mountains filling up the distance. Its cordial and unaffected tone gave me the greatest pleasure—did me a world of good—set me up for the afternoon, and gave me an evening's subject of discourse. For I talked to "them" (that is Kate and Georgy) about those bright mornings at the Peschiere, until bedtime, and threatened to write you such a letter next day as would—I don't exactly know what it was to do, but it was to be a great letter, expressive of all kinds of pleasant things, and perhaps the most genial letter that ever was written.

From that hour to this, I have again and again and again said, "I'll write to-morrow," and here I am to-day full of penitence—really sorry and ashamed, and with no excuse but my writing-life, which makes me get up and go out, when my morning work is done, and look at pen and ink no more until I begin again.

Besides which, I have been seeing Paris—wandering into hospitals, prisons, dead-houses, operas, theatres, concert-rooms, burial-grounds, palaces, and wine-shops. In my unoccupied fortnight of each month, every description of gaudy and ghastly sight has been passing before me in a rapid panorama. Before that, I had come here from Switzerland, over frosty mountains in dense fogs, and through towns with walls and drawbridges, and without population, or anything else in particular but soldiers and mud. I took a flight to London for four days, and went and came back over one sheet of snow,

sea excepted; and I wish that had been snow too. Then Forster (who is here now, and begs me to send his kindest regards) came to see Paris for himself, and in showing it to him, away I was borne again, like an enchanted rider. In short, I have had no rest in my play; and on Monday I am going to work again. A fortnight hence the play will begin once more; a fortnight after that the work will follow round, and so the letters that I care for go unwritten.

Do you care for French news? I hope not, because I don't know any. There is a melodrama, called "The French Revolution," now playing at the Cirque, in the first act of which there is the most tremendous representation of a *people* that can well be imagined. There are wonderful battles and so forth in the piece, but there is a power and massiveness in the mob which is positively awful. At another theatre "Clarissa Harlowe" is still the rage. There are some things in it rather calculated to astonish the ghost of Richardson, but Clarissa is very admirably played, and dies better than the original to my thinking; but Richardson is no great favourite of mine, and never seems to me to take his top-boots off, whatever he does. Several pieces are in course of representation, involving rare portraits of the English. In one, a servant, called "Tom Bob," who wears a particularly English waistcoat trimmed with gold lace and concealing his ankles, does very good things indeed. In another, a Prime Minister of England, who has ruined himself by railway speculations, hits off some of our national characteristics very happily, frequently making incidental mention of "Vishmingster," "Regeenstreet," and other places with which you are well acquainted. "Sir Fakson" is one of the characters in another play—"English to the Core"; and I saw a Lord Mayor of London at one of the small theatres the other night, looking uncommonly well in a stage-coachman's waistcoat, the order of the Garter, and a very low-crowned broad-brimmed hat, not unlike a dustman.

I was at Geneva at the time of the revolution. The moderation and mildness of the successful party were beyond all praise. Their appeals to the people of all parties—printed and pasted on the walls—have no parallel that I know of, in history, for their real good sterling

Christianity and tendency to promote the happiness of mankind. My sympathy is strongly with the Swiss radicals. They know what Catholicity is; they see, in some of their own valleys, the poverty, ignorance, misery, and bigotry it always brings in its train wherever it is triumphant; and they would root it out of their children's way at any price. I fear the end of the struggle will be that some Catholic power will step in to crush the dangerously well-educated republics (very dangerous to such neighbours); but there is a spirit in the people, or I very much mistake them, that will trouble the Jesuits there many years, and shake their altar-steps for them.

This is a poor return (I look down and see the end of the paper) for your letter, but in its cordial spirit of reciprocal friendship, it is not so bad a one if you could read it as I do, and it eases my mind and discharges my conscience. We are coming home, please God, at the end of March. You will be glad, I know, to hear that "Dombey" is doing wonders, and that the Christmas book shot far ahead of its predecessors. I hope you will like *the last chapter of No. 5.* If you can spare me a scrap of your handwriting in token of forgiveness, do; if not, I'll come and beg your pardon on the thirty-first of March. —Ever believe me, Cordially and truly yours.

To Dr. Hodgson.*

Regent's Park, London, *Twelfth June*, 1847.

My dear Sir—I write to you in reference to a scheme to which you may, perhaps, already have seen some allusion in the London "Athenæum" of to-day.

The party of amateurs connected with literature and art, who acted in London two years ago, have resolved to play again at one of the large theatres here for the benefit of Leigh Hunt, and to make a great appeal to all classes of society in behalf of a writer who should have received long ago, but has not yet, some enduring return from his country for all he has undergone and all the

* Principal of the Liverpool Institute and of the Charlton High School, Manchester.—Ed.

good he has done. It is believed that such a demonstration by literature on behalf of literature, and such a mark of sympathy by authors and artists, for one who has written so well, would be of more service, present and prospective, to Hunt than almost any other means of help that could be devised. And we know, from himself, that it would be most gratifying to his own feelings.

The arrangements are, as yet, in an imperfect state; for the date of their being carried out depends on our being able to get one of the large theatres before the close of the present London season. In the event of our succeeding, we propose acting in London, on Wednesday the fourteenth of July, and on Monday the nineteenth. On the first occasion we shall play "Every Man in his Humour," and a farce; on the second, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and a farce.

But we do not intend to stop here. Believing that Leigh Hunt has done more to instruct the young men of England, and to lend a helping hand to those who educate themselves, than any writer in England, we are resolved to come down, in a body, to Liverpool and Manchester, and to act one night at each place. And the object of my letter is, to ask you, as the representative of the great educational establishment of Liverpool, whether we can count on your active assistance; whether you will form a committee to advance our object; and whether, if we send you our circulars and addresses, you will endeavour to secure us a full theatre, and to enlist the general sympathy and interest in behalf of the cause we have at heart?

I address, by this post, a letter, which is almost the counterpart of the present, to the honorary secretaries of the Manchester Athenæum. If we find in both towns such a response as we confidently expect, I would propose, on behalf of my friends, that the Liverpool and Manchester Institutions should decide for us, at which town we shall first appear, and which play we shall act in each place.

I forbear entering into any more details, however, until I am favoured with your reply.—Always believe me, my dear Sir, Faithfully your Friend.

To William Sandys.

1 Devonshire Terrace, *Thirteenth June*, 1847.

Dear Sir—Many thanks for your kind note. I shall hope to see you when we return to town, from which we shall now be absent (with a short interval in next month) until October. Your account of the Cornishmen gave me great pleasure; and if I were not sunk in engagements so far, that the crown of my head is invisible to my nearest friends, I should have asked you to make me known to them. The new dialogue I will ask you by and by to let me see. I have, for the present, abandoned the idea of sinking a shaft in Cornwall.

I have sent your Shakesperian extracts to Collier.* It is a great comfort, to my thinking, that so little is known concerning the poet. It is a fine mystery; and I tremble every day lest something should come out. If he had had a Boswell, society wouldn't have respected his grave, but would calmly have had his skull in the phrenological shop-windows.—Believe me, Faithfully yours.

To H. P. Smith.

Broadstairs, *Ninth July*, 1847.

My dear Smith—I am really more obliged to you for your kindness about "The Eagle" (as I always call your house) than I can say. But when I come to town to-morrow week, for the Liverpool and Manchester plays, I shall have Kate and Georgy with me. Moreover, I shall be continually going out and coming in at unholy hours. Item, the timid will come at impossible seasons to "go over" their parts with the manager. Item, two Jews with musty sacks of dresses will be constantly coming backwards and forwards. Item, sounds as of groans will be heard while the inimitable Boz is "getting" his words —which happens all day. Item, Forster will incessantly deliver an address by Bulwer. Item, one hundred letters per diem will arrive from Manchester and Liverpool; and five actresses, in very limp bonnets, with extraordinary veils attached to them, will be always calling, protected by five mothers.

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* John Payne Collier, the Shakesperian critic.—Ed.

No, no, my actuary. Some congenial tavern is the fitting scene for these things, if I don't get into Devonshire Terrace, whereof I have some spark of hope. Eagles couldn't look the sun in the face and have such enormities going on in their nests.

I am, for the time, that obscene thing, in short, now chronicled in the Marylebone Register of Births—A PLAYER, Though still yours.

TO ALEXANDER IRELAND.

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, *Eleventh July*, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR—I am much indebted to you for the present of your notice of Hunt's books. I cannot praise it better or more appropriately than by saying it is in Hunt's own spirit, and most charmingly expressed. I had the most sincere and hearty pleasure in reading it.

Your announcement of "The Working Man's Life" had attracted my attention by reason of the title, which had a great interest for me. I hardly know if there is something wanting to my fancy in a certain genuine simple air I had looked for in the first part. But there is great promise in it, and I shall be earnest to know how it proceeds.

Now, to leave these pleasant matters, and resume my managerial character, which I shall be heartily glad (between ourselves) to lay down again, though I have none but pleasant correspondents, and the most easily governable company of actors on earth.

I have written to Mr. Robinson by this post that I wish these words, from our original London circular, to stand at top of the bills, after "For the benefit of Mr. Leigh Hunt":

"It is proposed to devote a portion of the proceeds of this benefit to the assistance of another celebrated writer, whose literary career is at an end, and who has no provision for the decline of his life."

I have also told him that there is no objection to its being known that this is Mr. Poole, the author of "Paul Pry," and "Little Pedlington," and many comic pieces of great merit, and whose farce of "Turning the Tables" we mean to finish with in Manchester. Beyond what he will get from these benefits, he has no resource in this

wide world, *I know*. There are reasons which make it desirable to get this fact abroad, and if you see no objection to paragraphing it at your office (sending the paragraph round, if you should please, to the other Manchester papers), I should be much obliged to you.

You may like to know, as a means of engendering a more complete individual interest in our actors, who they are. Jerrold and myself you have heard of; Mr. George Cruikshank and Mr. Leech (the best caricaturists of any time perhaps) need no introduction. Mr. Frank Stone (a Manchester man) and Mr. Egg are artists of high reputation. Mr. Forster is the critic of the "Examiner," the author of the "Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth," and very distinguished as a writer in the "Edinburgh Review." Mr. Lewes is also a man of great attainments in polite literature, and the author of a novel published not long since, called "Ranthorpe." Mr. Costello is a periodical writer, and a gentleman renowned as a tourist. Mr. Mark Lemon is a dramatic author, and the editor of "Punch"—a most excellent actor, as you will find. My brothers play small parts, for love, and have no greater note than the Treasury and the City confer on their disciples. Mr. Thompson is a private gentleman. You may know all this, but I thought it possible you might like to hold the key to our full company. Pray use it as you will.—My dear Sir,

Faithfully yours always.

To Miss Power.

Broadstairs, Kent, *Tuesday, Fourteenth July*, 1847.

My dear Miss Power—Though I am hopeless of Rosherville until after the twenty-eighth—for am I not beckoned, by angels of charity and by local committees, to Manchester and Liverpool, and to all sorts of bedevilments (if I may be allowed the expression) in the way of managerial miseries in the meantime—here I find myself falling into parenthesis within parenthesis, like Lord Brougham—yet will I joyfully come up to London on Friday, to dine at your house and meet the Dane,* whose Books I honour, and whose—to make the sentiment com-

* Hans Christian Andersen.—Ed.

plete, I want something that would sound like "Bones, I love!" but I can't get anything that unites reason with beauty. You, who have genius and beauty in your own person, will supply the gap in your kindness.

An advertisement in the newspapers mentioning the dinner-time, will be esteemed a favour.

Some wild beasts (in cages) have come down here, and involved us in a whirl of dissipation. A young lady in complete armour—at least, in something that shines very much, and is exceedingly scaley—goes into the den of ferocious lions, tigers, leopards, etc., and pretends to go to sleep upon the principal lion, upon which a rustic keeper, who speaks through his nose, exclaims, "Behold the abizid power of woobad!" and we all applaud tumultuously.

Seriously, she beats Van Amburgh. And I think the Duke of Wellington must have her painted by Landseer.

My penitent regards to Lady Blessington, Count D'Orsay, and my own Marchioness.—Ever, dear Miss Power,

Very faithfully yours.

To Miss Hogarth.

Edinburgh, *Thursday, Thirtieth December*, 1847.

My dear Georgy—I "take up my pen," as the young ladies write, to let you know how we are getting on; and as I shall be obliged to put it down again very soon, here goes. We lived with very hospitable people in a very splendid house near Glasgow, and were perfectly comfortable. The meeting * was the most stupendous thing as to numbers, and the most beautiful as to colours and decorations, I ever saw. The Inimitable did wonders. His grace, elegance, and eloquence enchanted all beholders. *Kate didn't go!* having been taken ill on the railroad between here and Glasgow.

It has been snowing, sleeting, thawing, and freezing, sometimes by turns and sometimes all together, since the night before last. Lord Jeffrey's household are in town here, not at Craigcrook, and jogging on in a cosy, old-fashioned, comfortable sort of way.

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* Opening of the Glasgow Athenæum, twenty-eighth December, at which Dickens presided.—Ed.

Kate sends her best love. She is a little poorly still, but nothing to speak of. She is frightfully anxious that her not having been to the great demonstration should be kept a secret. But I say that, like murder, it will out, and that to hope to veil such a tremendous disgrace from the general intelligence is out of the question. In one of the Glasgow papers she is elaborately described. I rather think Miss Alison, who is seventeen, was taken for her, and sat for the portrait.

Best love from both of us, to Charley, Mamey, Katey, Wally, Chickenstalker, Skittles, and the Hoshen Peck; last, and not least, to you. We talked of you at the Macreadys' party on Monday night. I hope —— came out lively, also that —— was truly amiable. Finally, that —— took everybody to their carriages, and that —— wept a good deal during the festivities? God bless you. Take care of yourself, for the sake of mankind in general.

Ever affectionately, dear Georgy.

To Hans Christian Andersen.

[No date: probably written in 1847.]

A thousand thanks, my dear Andersen, for your kind and very valuable recollection of me in your Christmas book. I am very proud of it, and feel deeply honoured by it; I cannot tell you how much I value such a token of acknowledgment from a man with the genius which you are possessed of.

Your book made my Christmas hearth very happy. We are all enchanted by it. The little boy, the old man, and the tin soldier are especially my favourites. I have repeatedly read that story, and read it with the most unspeakable pleasure.

I was a few days ago at Edinburgh, where I saw some of your friends, who talked much about you. Come again to England, soon! But whatever you do, do not stop writing, because we cannot bear to lose a single one of your thoughts. They are too true and simply beautiful to be kept safe only in your own head.

We returned some time since from the sea-coast, where I bade you adieu, and are now at our own house. My wife tells me that I must give you her kind greeting. Her sister tells me the same. The same say all my children.

And as we have all the same sentiments, I beg you to receive the summary in an affectionate greeting from

Your sincere and admiring Friend.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Devonshire Terrace,
Monday Evening, Tenth April, 1848.

My dear Bulwer Lytton—I confess to small faith in any American profits having international copyright for their aim. But I will carefully consider Blackwood's letter (when I get it) and will call upon you and tell you what occurs to me in reference to it, before I communicate with that northern light.

I have been "going" to write to you for many a day past, to thank you for your kindness to the General Theatrical Fund people, and for your note to me; but I have waited until I should hear of your being stationary somewhere. What you said of "The Battle of Life" gave me great pleasure. I was thoroughly wretched at having to use the idea for so short a story. I did not see its full capacity until it was too late to think of another subject, and I have always felt that I might have done a great deal better if I had taken it for the groundwork of a more extended book. But for an insuperable aversion I have to trying back in such a case, I should certainly forge that bit of metal again, as you suggest—one of these days perhaps.

I have not been special constable myself to-day—thinking there was rather an epidemic in that wise abroad. I walked over and looked at the preparations, without any baggage of staff, warrant, or affidavit.

Very faithfully yours.

To John Forster.

Devonshire Terrace,
Saturday, Twenty-second April, 1848.

My dear Forster—I finished "Goldsmith" * yesterday, after dinner, having read it from the first page to the last with the greatest care and attention.

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* Forster's "Life of Oliver Goldsmith."—Ed.

As a picture of the time, I really think it impossible to give it too much praise. It seems to me to be the very essence of all about the time that I have ever seen in biography or fiction, presented in most wise and humane lights, and in a thousand new and just aspects. I have never liked Johnson half so well. Nobody's contempt for Boswell ought to be capable of increase, but I have never seen him in my mind's eye half so plainly. The introduction of him is quite a masterpiece. I should point to that, if I didn't know the author, as being done by somebody with a remarkably vivid conception of what he narrated, and a most admirable and fanciful power of communicating it to another. All about Reynolds is charming; and the first account of the Literary Club and of Beauclerc as excellent a piece of description as ever I read in my life. But to read the book is to be in the time. It lives again in as fresh and lively a manner as if it were presented on an impossibly good stage by the very best actors that ever lived, or by the real actors come out of their graves on purpose.

And as to Goldsmith himself, and *his* life, and the tracing of it out in his own writings, and the manful and dignified assertion of him without any sobs, whines, or convulsions of any sort, it is throughout a noble achievement, of which, apart from any private and personal affection for you, I think (and really believe) I should feel proud, as one who had no indifferent perception of these books of his—to the best of my remembrance—when little more than a child. I was a little afraid in the beginning, when he committed those very discouraging imprudences, that you were going to champion him somewhat indiscriminately; but I very soon got over that fear, and found reason in every page to admire the sense, calmness, and moderation with which you make the love and admiration of the reader cluster about him from his youth, and strengthen with his strength—and weakness too, which is better still.

I don't quite agree with you in two small respects. First, I question very much whether it would have been a good thing for every great man to have had his Boswell, inasmuch that I think that two Boswells, or three at most, would have made great men extraordinarily false, and would have set them on always playing a part, and

would have made distinguished people about them for ever restless and distrustful. I can imagine a succession of Boswells bringing about a tremendous state of falsehood in society, and playing the very devil with confidence and friendship. Secondly, I cannot help objecting to that practice (begun, I think, or greatly enlarged by Hunt) of italicising lines and words and whole passages in extracts, without some very special reason indeed. It does appear to be a kind of assertion of the editor over the reader—almost over the author himself—which grates upon me. The author might almost as well do it himself to my thinking, as a disagreeable thing; and it is such a strong contrast to the modest, quiet, tranquil beauty of "The Deserted Village," for instance, that I would almost as soon hear "the town crier" speak the lines. The practice always reminds me of a man seeing a beautiful view, and not thinking how beautiful it is half so much as what he shall say about it.

In that picture at the close of the third book (a most beautiful one) of Goldsmith sitting looking out of window at the Temple trees, you speak of the "grey-eyed" rooks. Are you sure they are "grey-eyed"? The raven's eye is a deep lustrous black, and so, I suspect, is the rook's, except when the light shines full into it.

I have reserved for a closing word—though I *don't* mean to be eloquent about it, being far too much in earnest—the admirable manner in which the case of the literary man is stated throughout this book. It is splendid. I don't believe that any book was ever written, or anything ever done or said, half so conducive to the dignity and honour of literature as "The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith," by J. F., of the Inner Temple. The gratitude of every man who is content to rest his station and claims quietly on literature, and to make no feint of living by anything else, is your due for evermore. I have often said, here and there, when you have been at work upon the book, that I was sure it would be; and I shall insist on that debt being due to you (though there will be no need for insisting about it) as long as I have any tediousness and obstinacy to bestow on anybody. Lastly, I never will hear the biography compared with Boswell's except under vigorous protest. For I do say that it is mere folly to put into opposite

scales a book, however amusing and curious, written by an unconscious coxcomb like that, and one which surveys and grandly understands the characters of all the illustrious company that move in it.

My dear Forster, I cannot sufficiently say how proud I am of what you have done, or how sensible I am of being so tenderly connected with it. When I look over this note, I feel as if I had said no part of what I think; and yet if I were to write another I should say no more, for I can't get it out. I desire no better for my fame, when my personal dustiness shall be past the control of my love of order, than such a biographer and such a critic. And again I say, most solemnly, that literature in England has never had, and probably never will have, such a champion as you are, in right of this book.

Ever affectionately.

To Alexander Ireland.

Devonshire Terrace, *Twenty-second May*, 1848.

My dear Sir—You very likely know that my company of amateurs have lately been playing, with a great reputation, in London here. The object is, "The endowment of a perpetual curatorship of Shakespeare's house, to be always held by some one distinguished in literature, and more especially in dramatic literature," and we have already a pledge from the Shakespeare House Committee that Sheridan Knowles shall be recommended to the Government as the first curator. This pledge, which is in the form of a minute, we intend to advertise in our country bills.

Now, on Monday, the Fifth of June, we are going to play at Liverpool, where we are assured of a warm reception, and where an active committee for the issuing of tickets is already formed. Do you think the Manchester people would be equally glad to see us again, and that the house could be filled, as before, at our old prices? *If yes, would you and our other friends go, at once, to work in the cause?* The only night on which we could play in Manchester would be Saturday, the Third of June. Is it possible that the depression of the times may render a performance in Manchester unwise? In that case I would immediately abandon the idea. But what I want to

know, *by return of post*, is, is it safe or unsafe? If the former, here is the bill as it stood in London, with the addition, on the back, of a paragraph I would insert in Manchester, of which immediate use can be made. If the latter, my reason for wishing to settle the point immediately is that we may make another use of that Saturday night.

Assured of your generous feeling I make no apology for troubling you. A sum of money, got together by these means, will insure to literature (I will take good care of that) a proper expression of itself in the bestowal of an essentially literary appointment, not only now but henceforth. Much is to be done, time presses, and the least added the better.

I have addressed a counterpart of this letter to Mr. Francis Robinson, to whom perhaps you will communicate the bill. Faithfully yours always.

To the Hon. Mrs. Watson.

1 Devonshire Terrace, Regent's Park,
Twenty-seventh July, 1848.

My dear Mrs. Watson—I thought to have been at Rockingham long ago! It seems a century since I, standing in big boots on the Haymarket stage, saw you come into a box upstairs and look down on the humbled Bobadil *; since then I have had the kindest of notes from you, since then the finest of venison, and yet I have not seen the Rockingham flowers, and they are withering I dare say.

But we have acted at Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Glasgow; and the business of all this—and graver and heavier daily occupation in going to see a dying sister at Hornsey—has so worried me that I have hardly had an hour, far less a week. I shall never be quite happy, in a theatrical point of view, until you have seen me play in an English version of the French piece, "L'Homme Blasé," which fairly turned the head of Glasgow last Thursday night as ever was; neither shall

* A character in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in His Humour," played by Dickens.—Ed.

CHARLES DICKENS AS "CAPTAIN BOBADIL."
From the painting by C. R. Leslie, R. A

I be quite happy, in a social point of view, until I have been to Rockingham again. When the first event will come about Heaven knows. The latter will happen about the end of the November fogs and wet weather. For am I not going to Broadstairs now, to walk about on the sea-shore (why don't you bring your rosy children there?) and think what is to be done for Christmas! An idea occurs to me all at once. I must come down and read you that book before it's published. Shall it be a bargain? Were you all in Switzerland? I don't believe *I* ever was. It is such a dream now. I wonder sometimes whether I ever disputed with Haldimand; whether I ever drank mulled wine on the top of the Great St. Bernard, or was jovial at the bottom with company that have stolen into my affection; whether I ever was merry and happy in that valley on the Lake of Geneva, or saw you one evening (when I didn't know you) walking down among the green trees outside Elysée, arm-in-arm with a gentleman in a white hat. I am quite clear that there is no foundation for these visions. But I should like to go somewhere, too, and try it all over again. I don't know how it is, but the ideal world in which my lot is cast has an odd effect on the real one, and makes it chiefly precious for such remembrances. I get quite melancholy over them sometimes, especially when, as now, those great piled-up semicircles of bright faces, at which I have lately been looking—all laughing, earnest and intent—have faded away like dead people. They seem a ghostly moral of everything in life to me.

Kate sends her best love, in which Georgy would as heartily unite, I know, but that she is already gone to Broadstairs with the children. We think of following on Saturday morning, but that depends on my poor sister. Pray give my most cordial remembrances to Watson, and tell him they include a great deal. I meant to have written you a letter. I don't know what this is. There is no word for it. So, if you will still let me owe you one, I will pay my debt, on the smallest encouragement, from the seaside. Here, there, and elsewhere, I am, with perfect truth, believe me,

Very faithfully yours.

To W. C. Macready.

Broadstairs, Kent,
Saturday, Twenty-sixth August, 1848.

My dear Macready—I was about to write to you when I received your welcome letter. You knew I should come from a somewhat longer distance than this to give you a hearty Godspeed and farewell on the eve of your journey. What do you say to Monday, the fourth, or Saturday, the second? Fix either day, let me know which suits you best—at what hour you expect the Inimitable, and the Inimitable will come up to the scratch like a man and a brother.

Permit me, in conclusion, to nail my colours to the mast. Stars and stripes are so-so—showy, perhaps; but my colours is the union jack, which I am told has the remarkable property of having braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze. Likewise, it is the flag of Albion—the standard of Britain; and Britons, as I am informed, never, never, never—will—be—slaves!

My sentiment is: Success to the United States as a golden campaigning ground, but blow the United States to 'tarnal smash as an Englishman's place of residence. Gentlemen, are you all charged? Affectionately ever.

To Mark Lemon.

Bedford Hotel, Brighton,
Twenty-eighth November, 1848.

My dear Mark—I assure you, most unaffectedly and cordially, that the dedication of that book * to Mary and *Kate* (not Catherine) will be a real delight to me, and to all of us. I know well that you propose it in "affectionate regard," and value and esteem it, therefore, in a way not easy of expression.

You were talking of "coming" down, and now, in a mean and dodging way, you write about "sending" the second act! I have a propogician to make. Come down on Friday. There is a train leaves London Bridge at two—gets here at four. By that time I shall be ready to strike work. We can take a little walk, dine, discuss,

* Lemon's book, "The Enchanted Doll," was to be dedicated to Dickens's daughters.—Ed.

and you can go back in good time next morning. I really think this ought to be done, and indeed MUST be done. Write and say it shall be done.

A little management will be required in dramatising the third part, where there are some things I *describe* (for effect's sake, and as a matter of art) which must be *said* on the stage. Redlaw is in a new condition of mind, which fact must be shot point-blank at the audience, I suppose, "as from the deadly level of a gun." By anybody who knew how to play Milly, I think it might be made very good. Its effect is very pleasant upon me. I have also given Mr. and Mrs. Tetterby another innings.

I went to the play last night—fifth act of "Richard the Third." Richmond by a stout *lady*, with a particularly well-developed bust, who finished all the speeches with the soubrette simper. Also, at the end of the tragedy she came forward (still being Richmond) and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, on Wednesday next the entertainments will be for *My* benefit, when I hope to meet your approbation and support." Then, having bowed herself into the stage-door, she looked out of it, and said, winningly, "Won't you come?" which was enormously applauded. Ever affectionately.

To Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

Devonshire Terrace, *Twenty-fifth May*, 1849.

My dear Stanfield—No—no—no! Murder, murder! Madness and misconception! Any *one* of the subjects—not the whole. Oh, blessed star of early morning, what do you think I am made of, that I should, on the part of any man, prefer such a pig-headed, calf-eyed, donkey-eared, imp-hoofed request!

Says my friend to me, "Will you ask *your* friend, Mr. Stanfield, what the damage of a little picture of that size would be, that I may treat myself with the same, if I can afford it?" Says I, "I will." Says he, "Will you suggest that I should like it to be *one* of those subjects?" Says I, "I will."

I am beating my head against the door with grief and frenzy, and I shall continue to do so, until I receive your answer.—Ever heartily yours.

The Misconceived One.

To the Editor of the "Times."

Devonshire Terrace,
Tuesday, Thirteenth November, 1849.

Sir—I was a witness of the execution at Horsemonger Lane this morning. I went there with the intention of observing the crowd gathered to behold it, and I had excellent opportunities of doing so, at intervals all through the night, and continuously from daybreak until after the spectacle was over. I do not address you on the subject with any intention of discussing the abstract question of capital punishment, or any of the arguments of its opponents or advocates. I simply wish to turn this dreadful experience to some account for the general good, by taking the readiest and most public means of adverting to an intimation given by Sir G. Grey in the last session of Parliament, that the Government might be induced to give its support to a measure making the infliction of capital punishment a private solemnity within the prison walls (with such guarantees for the last sentence of the law being inexorably and surely administered as should be satisfactory to the public at large), and of most earnestly beseeching Sir G. Grey, as a solemn duty which he owes to society, and a responsibility which he cannot for ever put away, to originate such a legislative change himself. I believe that a sight so inconceivably awful as the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd collected at that execution this morning could be imagined by no man, and could be presented in no heathen land under the sun. The horrors of the gibbet and of the crime which brought the wretched murderers to it faded in my mind before the atrocious bearing, looks, and language of the assembled spectators. When I came upon the scene at midnight, the *shrillness* of the cries and howls that were raised from time to time, denoting that they came from a concourse of boys and girls already assembled in the best places, made my blood run cold. As the night went on, screeching, and laughing, and yelling in strong chorus of parodies on negro melodies, with substitutions of "Mrs. Manning" for "Susannah," and the like, were added to these. When the day dawned, thieves, low prostitutes, ruffians, and vagabonds of every kind, flocked on to the ground, with every va-

riety of offensive and foul behaviour. Fightings, faintings, whistlings, imitations of Punch, brutal jokes, tumultuous demonstrations of indecent delight when swooning women were dragged out of the crowd by the police, with their dresses disordered, gave a new zest to the general entertainment. When the sun rose brightly —as it did—it gilded thousands upon thousands of upturned faces, so inexpressibly odious in their brutal mirth or callousness, that a man had cause to feel ashamed of the shape he wore, and to shrink from himself, as fashioned in the image of the Devil. When the two miserable creatures who attracted all this ghastly sight about them were turned quivering into the air, there was no more emotion, no more pity, no more thought that two immortal souls had gone to judgment, no more restraint in any of the previous obscenities, than if the name of Christ had never been heard in this world, and there were no belief among men but that they perished like the beasts.

I have seen, habitually, some of the worst sources of general contamination and corruption in this country, and I think there are not many phases of London life that could surprise me. I am solemnly convinced that nothing that ingenuity could devise to be done in this city, in the same compass of time, could work such ruin as one public execution, and I stand astounded and appalled by the wickedness it exhibits. I do not believe that any community can prosper where such a scene of horror and demoralisation as was enacted this morning outside Horsemonger Lane Gaol is presented at the very doors of good citizens, and is passed by unknown or forgotten. And when in our prayers and thanksgivings for the season we are humbly expressing before God our desire to remove the moral evils of the land, I would ask your readers to consider whether it is not a time to think of this one, and to root it out.

I am, Sir, your faithful Servant.

To the Editor of the "Times."

Devonshire Terrace,
Saturday, Seventeenth November, 1849.

Sir—When I wrote to you on Tuesday last I had no intention of troubling you again; but as one of your cor-

respondents has to-day expressed a reasonable desire that I would explain myself more clearly, and as I hope I may do no injury to the cause I would serve by stating my views upon it a little more in detail, I shall be glad to do so if you will allow me the opportunity.

My positions in reference to the demoralising nature of public executions are:

First, that they chiefly attract as spectators the lowest, the most depraved, the most abandoned of mankind, in whom they inspire no wholesome emotions whatever.

Second, that the public infliction of a violent death is not a salutary spectacle for any class of people; but that it is in the nature of things that on the class by whom it is generally witnessed it should have a debasing and hardening influence.

On the first head I must appeal again to my own experience of the execution of last Tuesday morning; to all the evidence that has ever been taken upon the subject, showing that executions have been the favourite sight of convicts of all descriptions; to the knowledge possessed by the magistracy and police of the general character of such crowds; to the police reports that are sure to follow their assemblage; to the unvarying description of them given in the newspapers; to the indisputable fact that no decent father is willing that his son, and no decent master is willing that his apprentices or servants, should mingle in them; to the indisputable fact that all society, its dregs excepted, recoil from them as masses of abomination and brutality. That there were not more robberies committed at this last execution was not the fault of the assembled thieves, whose numbers on the occasion the Home Secretary may easily learn from the commissioners in Scotland Yard, but the merit of the police, whose vigilance was beyond all praise.

On the second head, after a passing allusion to the hardening influence which familiarity, even with natural death, produces on coarse minds, I must again refer to my own experience. Nothing would have been a greater comfort to me—nothing would have so much relieved in my mind the unspeakable terrors of the scene, as to have been enabled to believe that any portion of the immense crowd—that any grains of sand in the vast moral desert stretching away on every side—were moved to any senti-

ments of fear, repentance, pity, or natural horror by what they saw upon the drop. It was impossible to look around and rest in any such belief. With every consideration and respect for your suggestion that the concourse may have been belying their mental struggles by fanatic exaggerations, I am confident that if you had been there beside me, seeing what I saw, and hearing what I heard, you could never have admitted the thought. Such a state of mind has its signs and tokens equally with any other, and no such signs and tokens were there. The mirth was not hysterical, the shoutings and fightings were not the efforts of a strained excitement seeking to vent itself in any relief. The whole was unmistakably callous and bad, as the ferocious woman who was charged on the same day with threatening to murder another in the midst of the multitude, proclaiming that she had a knife about her, and would have her heart's blood, and be hanged on the same gibbet with her namesake, Mrs. Manning, whose death she had come to see—as she had her evil passions excited to the utmost by the scene, so had all the crowd. I believe this was the whole and sole effect of what they had come to see, and I hold that no human being, not being the better for such a sight, could go away without being the worse for it.

To prevent such frightful spectacles in a Christian country, and all the incalculable evils they engender, I would have the last sentence of the law executed with comparative privacy within the prison walls. Before I state how, let me strengthen this proposal with some words of Fielding on this subject, to whose profound knowledge of human nature you, I know, will render full justice:

"The execution should be in some degree private. And here the poets will again assist us. Foreigners have found fault with the cruelty of the English drama, in representing frequent murders upon the stage. In fact, this is not only cruel, but highly injudicious: a murder behind the scenes, if the poet knows how to manage it, will affect the audience with greater terror than if it was acted before their eyes. Of this we have an instance in the murder of the King in "Macbeth." Terror hath, I believe, been carried higher by this single instance than by all the blood which hath been spilt upon the stage.

To the poets I may add the priests, whose politics have never been doubted. Those of Egypt in particular, where the sacred mysteries were first devised, well knew the use of hiding from the eyes of the vulgar what they intended should inspire them with the greatest awe and dread. The mind of man is so much more capable of magnifying than his eye, that I question whether every object is not lessened by being looked upon; and this more especially when the passions are concerned; for those are ever apt to fancy much more satisfaction in those objects which they affect, and much more of mischief in those which they abhor, than are really to be found in either. If executions, therefore, were so contrived that few could be present at them, they would be much more shocking and terrible to the crowd without doors than at present, as well as much more dreadful to the criminals themselves."

From the moment of a murderer's being sentenced to death, I would dismiss him to the dread obscurity to which the wisest judge upon the bench consigned the murderer Rush. I would allow no curious visitors to hold any communication with him; I would place every obstacle in the way of his sayings and doings being served up in print on Sunday mornings for the perusal of families. His execution within the walls of the prison should be conducted with every terrible solemnity that careful consideration could devise. Mr. Calcraft, the hangman (of whom I have some information in reference to this last occasion) should be restrained in his unseemly briskness, in his jokes, his oaths, and his brandy. To attend the execution I would summon a jury of twenty-four, to be called the witness jury, eight to be summoned on a low qualification, eight on a higher, eight on a higher still! so that it might fairly represent all classes of society. There should be present, likewise, the governor of the gaol, the chaplain, the surgeon, and other officers, the sheriff of the county or city, and two inspectors of prisons. All these should sign a grave and solemn form of certificate (the same in every case) that on such a day, at such an hour, in such a gaol, for such a crime, such a murderer was hanged in their sight. There should be another certificate from the officers of the prison that the person hanged was that person, and no other; a third, that that person was buried. These should be posted on

the prison-gate for twenty-one days, printed in the "Gazette," and exhibited in other public places; and during the hour of the body's hanging I would have the bells of all the churches in that town or city tolled, and all the shops shut up, that all might be reminded of what was being done.

I submit to you that, with the law so changed, the public would (as is right) know much more of the infliction of this tremendous punishment than they know of the infliction of any other. There are not many common subjects, I think, of which they know less than transportation; and yet they never doubt that when a man is ordered to be sent abroad he goes abroad. The details of the commonest prison in London are unknown to the public at large, but they are quite satisfied that prisoners said to be in this or that gaol are really there and really undergo its discipline. The "mystery" of private execution is objected to; but has not mystery been the character of every improvement in convict treatment and prison discipline effected within the last twenty years? From the police van to Norfolk Island, are not all the changes, changes that make the treatment of the prisoner mysterious? His seclusion in his conveyance hither and thither from the public sight, instead of his being walked through the streets, strung with twenty more to a chain, like the galley slaves in "Don Quixote" (as I remember to have seen in my school-days), makes a mystery of him. His being known by a number instead of by a name, and his being under the rigorous discipline of the associated silent system—to say nothing of the solitary, which I regard as a mistake—is all mysterious. I cannot understand that the mystery of such an execution as I propose would be other than a fitting climax to all these wise regulations, or why, if there be anything in this objection, we should not return to the days when ladies paid visits to highwaymen, drinking their punch in the condemned cells of Newgate; or Ned Ward, the London spy, went upon a certain regular day of the week to Bridewell to see the women whipped.

Another class of objectors I know there are, who, desiring the total abolition of capital punishment, will have nothing less, and who, not doubting the fearful influence of public executions, would have it protracted for an in-

definite term, rather than spare the demoralisation they do not dispute, at the risk of losing sight for a while of their final end. But of these I say nothing, considering them, however good and pure in intention, unreasonable, and not to be argued with.

With many thanks to you for your courtesy, and begging most earnestly to assure you that I write in a deep conviction that I incurred a duty when I became a witness of the execution on Tuesday last, from which nothing ought to move me, and which every hour's reflection strengthens, I am, Sir, your faithful Servant.

To M. de Cerjat.

Devonshire Terrace,
Saturday, Twenty-ninth December, 1849.

My dear Cerjat—I received your letter at breakfast-time this morning with a pleasure my eloquence is unable to express and your modesty unable to conceive. It is so delightful to be remembered at this time of the year in your house where we have been so happy, and in dear old Lausanne, that we always hope to see again, that I can't help pushing away the first page of "Copperfield" No. 10, now staring at me with what I may literally call a blank aspect, and plunging energetically into this reply.

What a strange coincidence that is about Blunderstone House! Of all the odd things I have ever heard (and their name is Legion), I think it is the oddest. I went down into that part of the country on the Seventh of January last year, when I was meditating the story, and chose Blunderstone for the sound of its name. I had previously observed much of what you say about the poor girls. In all you suggest with so much feeling about their return to virtue being cruelly cut off, I concur with a sore heart. I have been turning it over in my mind for some time, in the history of Little Em'ly (who *must* fall—there is no hope for her), to put it before the thoughts of people in a new and pathetic way, and perhaps to do some good. You will be glad to hear, I know, that "Copperfield" is a great success. I think it is better liked than any of my other books.

We had a most delightful time at Watsons' (for both of

them we have preserved and strengthened a real affection), and were the gayest of the gay. There was a Miss Boyle staying in the house, who is an excellent amateur actress, and she and I got up some scenes from "The School for Scandal" and from "Nickleby," with immense success. We played in the old hall, with the audience filled up and running over with servants. The entertainments concluded with feats of legerdemain (for the performance of which I have a pretty good apparatus, collected at divers times and in divers places), and we then fell to country dances of a most frantic description, and danced all night. We often spoke of you and Mrs. Cerjat and of Haldimand, and wished you were all there. Watson and I have some fifty times "registered a vow" (like O'Connell) to come to Lausanne together, and have even settled in what month and week. Something or other has always interposed to prevent us; but I hope, please God, most certainly to see it again, when my labours-Copperfieldian shall have terminated.

You have no idea what that hanging of the Mannings really was. The conduct of the people was so indescribably frightful, that I felt for some time afterwards almost as if I were living in a city of devils. I feel, at this hour, as if I never could go near the place again. My letters have made a great to-do, and led to a great agitation of the subject; but I have not a confident belief in any change being made, mainly because the total abolitionists are utterly reckless and dishonest (generally speaking), and would play the deuce with any such proposition in Parliament, unless it were strongly supported by the Government, which it would certainly not be, the Whig motto (in office) being "*laissez-aller.*" I think Peel might do it if he came in. Two points have occurred to me as being a good commentary to the objections to my idea. The first is that a most terrific uproar was made when the hanging processions were abolished, and the ceremony shrunk from Tyburn to the prison door. The second is that, at this very time, under the British Government in New South Wales, executions take place *within the prison walls*, with decidedly improved results. (I am waiting to explode this fact on the first man of mark who gives me the opportunity.)

Unlike you, we have had no marriages or giving in mar-

riage here. We might have had, but a certain young lady, whom you know, is hard to please. The children are all well, thank God! Charley is going to Eton the week after next, and has passed a first-rate examination. Kate is quite well, and unites with me and Georgina in love to you and Mrs. Cerjat and Haldimand, whom I would give a good deal (tell him) to have several hours' contradiction of at his own table. Good heavens, how obstinate we would both be! I see him leaning back in his chair, with his right forefinger out, and saying, "Good God!" in reply to some proposition of mine, and then laughing.

All in a moment a feeling comes over me, as if you and I have been still talking, smoking cigars outside the inn at Martigny, the piano sounding outside, and Lady Mary Taylour singing. I look into my garden (which is covered with snow) rather dolefully, but take heart again, and look brightly forward to another expedition to the Great St. Bernard, when Mrs. Cerjat and I shall laugh as I fancy I have never laughed since, in one of those one-sided cars; and when we shall learn from Haldimand, in a little dingy cabaret, at lunch-time, how to secure a door in travelling (do you remember?) by balancing a chair against it on its two hind legs.

I do hope that we may all come together again once more, while there is a head of hair left among us; and in this hope remain, my dear Cerjat, Your faithful Friend.

To Mrs. Gaskell.

Devonshire Terrace, *Thirty-first January*, 1850.

My dear Mrs. Gaskell—You may perhaps have seen an announcement in the papers of my intention to start a new cheap weekly journal of general literature.

I do not know what your literary vows of temperance or abstinence may be, but as I do honestly know that there is no living English writer whose aid I would desire to enlist in preference to the authoress of "Mary Barton" (a book that most profoundly affected and impressed me), I venture to ask you whether you can give me any hope that you will write a short tale, or any number of tales, for the projected pages.

No writer's name will be used, neither my own nor any other; every paper will be published without any signature, and all will seem to express the general mind and purpose of the journal, which is the raising up of those that are down, and the general improvement of our social condition. I should set a value on your help which your modesty can hardly imagine; and I am perfectly sure that the least result of your reflection or observation in respect of the life around you, would attract attention and do good.

Of course I regard your time as valuable, and consider it so when I ask you if you could devote any of it to this purpose.

If you could and would prefer to speak to me on the subject, I should be very glad indeed to come to Manchester for a few hours and explain anything you might wish to know. My unaffected and great admiration of your book makes me very earnest in all relating to you. Forgive my troubling you for this reason, and believe me ever, Faithfully yours.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Broadstairs, Kent, *Tuesday, Third September*, 1850.

My dear Sir Edward—I have had the long-contemplated talk with Forster about the play, and write to assure you that I shall be delighted to come down to Knebworth and do Bobadil, or anything else, provided it would suit your convenience to hold the great dramatic festival in the last week of October. The concluding number of "Copperfield" will prevent me from leaving here until Saturday, the twenty-sixth of that month. If I were at my own disposal, I hope I need not say I should be at yours.

Forster will tell you with what men we must do the play, and what laurels we would propose to leave for the gathering of new aspirants; of whom I hope you have a reasonable stock in your part of the country.

Do you know Mary Boyle—daughter of the old Admiral? because she is the very best actress I ever saw off the stage, and immeasurably better than a great many I have seen on it. I have acted with her in a country house

in Northamptonshire, and am going to do so again next November. If you know her, I think she would be more than pleased to play, and by giving her something good in a farce we could get her to do Mrs. Kitely. In that case my little sister-in-law would "go on" for the second lady, and you could do without actresses, besides giving the thing a particular grace and interest.

If we could get Mary Boyle, we would do "Used Up," which is a delightful piece, as the farce. But maybe you know nothing about the said Mary, and in that case I should like to know what you would think of doing.

You gratify me more than I can tell you by what you say about "Copperfield," the more so as I hope myself that some heretofore-deficient qualities are there. You are not likely to misunderstand me when I say that I like it very much, and am deeply interested in it, and that I have kept and am keeping my mind very steadily upon it.—Believe me always, Very faithfully yours.

To Miss Mary Boyle.

Broadstairs, Kent,
Monday Night, Sixteenth September, 1850.

My dear Miss Boyle—Your letter having arrived in time for me to write a line by the evening post, I came out of a paroxysm of "Copperfield," to say that I am *perfectly delighted* to read it, and to know that we are going to act together in that merry party. We dress "Every Man" in Queen Elizabeth's time. The acting copy is much altered from the old play, but we still smooth down phrases when needful. I don't remember any one that is changed. Georgina says she can't describe the dress Mrs. Kitely used to wear. I shall be in town on Saturday, and will then get Maclise to make me a little sketch of it, carefully explained, which I will post to you. At the same time I will send you the book. After consideration of farces, it has occurred to me (old Ben being, I dare say, "rare"; but I *do* know rather heavy here and there) that Mrs. Inchbald's "Animal Magnetism," which we have often played, will "go" with a greater laugh than anything else. That book I will send you on Saturday too. You will find your part (Lisette, I think it is called,

but it is a waiting-maid) a most admirable one; and I have seen people laugh at the piece until they have hung over the front of the boxes like ripe fruit. You may dress the part to please yourself after reading it. We wear powder. I will take care (bringing a theatrical hairdresser for the company) of your wig! We will rehearse the two pieces when we go down, or at least anything with which you have to do, over and over again. You will find my company so well used to it, and so accustomed to consider it a grave matter of business, as to make it easy. I am now awaiting the French books with a view to Rockingham, and I hope to report of that too, when I write to you on Saturday. My dear Miss Boyle, very faithfully yours.

To Miss Mary Boyle.

Devonshire Terrace, *Friday, Twentieth September*, 1850.

My dear Miss Boyle—I enclose you the book of "Animal Magnetism," and the book of "Every Man in his Humour"; also a sketch by Mr. Maclise of a correct and picturesque Mrs. Kitely. Mr. Forster is Kitely; Mr. Lemon, Brainworm; Mr. Leech, Master Matthew; Mr. Jerrold, Master Stephen; Mr. Stone, Downright. Kitely's dress is a very plain purple gown, like a Bluecoat-boy's. Downright's dress is also very sober, chiefly brown and grey. All the rest of us are very bright. I am flaming red. Georgina will write you about your colour and hers in "Animal Magnetism"; the gayer the better. I am the Doctor, in black, with red stockings. Mr. Lemon (an excellent actor), the valet, as far as I can remember, in blue and yellow, and a chintz waistcoat. Mr. Leech is the Marquis, and Mr. Egg the one-eyed servant.

What do you think of doing "Animal Magnetism" as the last piece (we may play three in all, I think) at Rockingham? If so, we might make Quin the one-eyed servant, and beat up with Mrs. Watson for a Marquis. Will you tell me what you think of this, addressed to Broadstairs? I have not heard from Bulwer again. I dare say I have crossed a letter from him by coming up to-day; but I have every reason to believe that the last week in October is the time. Ever very faithfully yours.

PS.—This is quite a managerial letter, which I write with all manner of appointments and business discussions going on about me, having my pen on the paper and my eye on "Household Words," my head on "Copperfield" and my ear nowhere particularly.

To the Hon. Mrs. Watson.

Broadstairs, Kent, *Twenty-fourth September*, 1850.

My dear Mrs. Watson—Coming out of "Copperfield" into a condition of temporary and partial consciousness, I plunge into histrionic duties, and hold enormous correspondence with Miss Boyle, between whom and myself the most portentous packets are continually passing. I send you a piece we purpose playing last at Rockingham, which "my company" played in London, Scotland, Manchester, Liverpool, and I don't know where else. It is one of the most ridiculous things ever done. We purpose, as I have said, playing it last. Why do I send it to you? Because there is an excellent part (played in my troupe by George Cruikshank) for your brother in it —Jeffrey; with a black patch on his eye, and a lame leg, he would be charming—noble! If he is come home, give him my love and tell him so. If he is not come home, do me that favour when he does come. And add that I have a wig for him belonging to the part, which I have an idea of sending to the Exposition of '51, as a triumph of human ingenuity.

I am the Doctor; Miss Boyle, Lisette; Georgy, the other little woman. We have nearly arranged our "bill" for Rockingham. We shall want one more reasonably good actor, besides your brother and Miss Boyle's, to play the Marquis in this piece. Do you know a being endowed by nature with the requisite qualities?

There are some things in the next "Copperfield" that I think better than any that have gone before. After I have been believing such things with all my heart and soul, two results always ensue: first, I can't write plainly to the eye; secondly, I can't write sensibly to the mind. So "Copperfield" is to blame, and I am not, for this wandering note; and if you like it, you'll forgive me.—Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson, Very faithfully yours.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Devonshire Terrace, *Sunday Night, Fifth January*, 1851.

My dear Bulwer—I am so sorry to have missed you! I had gone down to Forster, comedy * in hand.

I think it *most admirable*. Full of character, strong in interest, rich in capital situations, and *certain to go nobly*. You know how highly I thought of "Money," but I sincerely think these three acts finer. I did not think of the slight suggestions you make, but I said, *en passant*, that perhaps the drunken scene might do better on the stage a little concentrated. I don't believe it would require even that, with the leading-up which you propose. I cannot say too much of the comedy to express what I think and feel concerning it; and I look at it, too, remember, with the yellow eye of an actor! I should have taken to it (need I say so!) *con amore* in any case. but I should have been jealous of your reputation, exactly as I appreciate your generosity. If I had a misgiving of ten lines I should have scrupulously mentioned it.

Stone will take the Duke capitally; and I will answer for his being got into doing it *very well*. Looking down the perspective of a few winter evenings here, I am confident about him. Forster will be thoroughly sound and real. Lemon is so surprisingly sensible and trustworthy on the stage, that I don't think any actor could touch his part as he will; and I hope you will have opportunities of testing the accuracy of this prediction. Egg ought to do the Author to absolute perfection. As to Jerrold—there he stands in the play! I would propose Leech (well made up) for Easy. He is a good name, and I see nothing else for him.

This brings me to my own part. If we had any one, or could get any one, for Wilmot, I could do (I think) something so near your meaning in Sir Gilbert, that I let him go with a pang. Assumption has charms for me—I hardly know for how many wild reasons—so delightful, that I feel a loss of, oh! I can't say what exquisite foolery,

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* Bulwer's "Not So Bad as We Seem; or, Many Sides to a Character," written for the amateur company that played for the benefit of the Guild of Literature and Art.—Ed.

when I lose a chance of being some one in voice, etc., not at all like myself. But—I speak quite freely, knowing you will not mistake me—I know from experience that we could find nobody to hold the play together in Wilmot if I didn't do it. I think I could touch the gallant, generous, careless pretence, with the real man at the bottom of it, so as to take the audience with him from the first scene. I am quite sure I understand your meaning; and I am absolutely certain that as Jerrold, Forster, and Stone came in, I could, as a mere little bit of mechanics, present them better by doing that part, and paying as much attention to their points as my own, than another amateur actor could. Therefore I throw up my cap for Wilmot, and hereby devote myself to him, heart and head!

I ought to tell you that in a play we once rehearsed and never played (but rehearsed several times, and very carefully), I saw Lemon do a piece of reality with a rugged pathos in it, which I felt, as I stood on the stage with him, to be extraordinarily good. In the serious part of Sir Gilbert he will surprise you. And he has an intuitive discrimination in such things which will just keep the suspicious part from being too droll at the outset—which will just show a glimpse of something in the depths of it.

The moment I come back to town (within a fortnight, please God!) I will ascertain from Forster where you are. Then I will propose to you that we call our company together, agree upon one general plan of action, and that you and I immediately begin to see and book our Vice-Presidents, etc. Further, I think we ought to see about the Queen. I would suggest our playing first about three weeks before the opening of the Exhibition, in order that it may be the town talk before the country people and foreigners come. Macready thinks with me that a very large sum of money may be got in London.

I propose (for cheapness and many other considerations) to make a theatre expressly for the purpose, which we can put up and take down—say in the Hanover Square Rooms—and move into the country. As Watson wanted something of a theatre made for his forthcoming Little Go, I have made it a sort of model of what I mean, and shall be able to test its working powers before I see you. Many things that, for portability, were to be avoided in

Mr. Hewitt's theatre, I have replaced with less expensive and weighty contrivances.

Now, my dear Bulwer, I have come to the small hours, and am writing alone here, as if *I* were writing something to do what your comedy will. At such a time the temptation is strong upon me to say a great deal more, but I will only say this—in mercy to you—that I do devoutly believe that this plan carried, will entirely change the status of the literary man in England, and make a revolution in his position, which no Government, no power on earth but his own, could ever effect. I have implicit confidence in the scheme—so splendidly begun—if we carry it out with a steadfast energy. I have a strong conviction that we hold in our hands the peace and honour of men of letters for centuries to come, and that you are destined to be their best and most enduring benefactor.

Oh! what a procession of New Years might walk out of all this, after we are very dusty!

Ever yours faithfully.

To Miss Mary Boyle.

Devonshire Terrace,
Friday Night, late, Twenty-first February, 1851.

My dear Miss Boyle—I have devoted a couple of hours this evening to going very carefully over your paper (which I have read before) and to endeavouring to bring it closer, and to lighten it, and to give it that sort of compactness which a habit of composition, and of disciplining one's thoughts like a regiment, and of studying the art of putting each soldier into his right place, may have gradually taught me to think necessary. I hope, when you see it in print, you will not be alarmed by my use of the pruning-knife. I have tried to exercise it with the utmost delicacy and discretion, and to suggest to you, especially towards the end, how this sort of writing (regard being had to the size of the journal in which it appears) requires to be compressed, and is made pleasanter by compression. This all reads very solemnly, but only because I want you to read it (I mean the article) with as loving an eye as I have truly tried to touch it with a

loving and gentle hand. I propose to call it "My Mahogany Friend." The other name is too long, and I think not attractive. Until I go to the office to-morrow and see what is actually in hand, I am not certain of the number in which it will appear, but Georgy shall write on Monday and tell you. We are always a fortnight in advance of the public, or the mechanical work could not be done. I think there are many things in it that are *very pretty*. The Katie part is particularly well done. If I don't say more, it is because I have a heavy sense, in all cases, of the responsibility of encouraging any one to enter on that thorny track, where the prizes are so few and the blanks so many; where——

But I won't write you a sermon. With the fire going out, and the first shadows of a new story hovering in a ghostly way about me (as they usually begin to do, when I have finished an old one), I am in danger of doing the heavy business, and becoming a heavy guardian, or something of that sort, instead of the light and airy Joe.

So good-night, and believe that you may always trust me, and never find a grim expression (towards you) in any that I wear. Ever yours.

To W. C. Macready.

Devonshire Terrace, *Twenty-seventh February*, 1851.

My dear Macready—Forster told me to-day that you wish Tennyson's sonnet to be read after your health is given on Saturday.* I am perfectly certain that it would not do at that time. I am quite convinced that the audience would not receive it, under those exciting circumstances, as it ought to be received. If I had to read it, I would on no account undertake to do so at that period, in a great room crowded with a dense company. I have an instinctive assurance that it would fail. Being with Bulwer this morning, I communicated your wish to him, and he immediately felt as I do. I could enter into many reasons which induce me to form this opinion. But I

* At the farewell dinner to Macready on his quitting the stage. —Ed.

believe that you have that confidence in me that I may spare you the statement of them.

I want to know one thing from you. As I shall be obliged to be at the London Tavern in the afternoon of tomorrow, Friday (I write, observe, on Thursday night), I shall be much helped in the arrangements if you will send me your answer by a messenger (addressed here) on the receipt of this. Which would you prefer—that "Auld Lang Syne" should be sung after your health is given and before you return thanks, or after you have spoken?

I cannot forbear a word about last night. I think I have told you sometimes, my much-loved friend, how, when I was a mere boy, I was one of your faithful and devoted adherents in the pit; I believe as true a member of that true host of followers as it has ever boasted. As I improved myself and was improved by favouring circumstances in mind and fortune, I only became the more earnest (if it were possible) in my study of you. No light portion of my life arose before me when the quiet vision to which I am beholden, in I don't know how great a degree, or for how much—who does?—faded so nobly from my bodily eyes last night. And if I were to try to tell you what I felt—of regret for its being past for ever, and of joy in the thought that you could have taken your leave of *me* but in God's own time—I should only blot this paper with some drops that would certainly not be of ink, and give very faint expression to very strong emotions.

What is all this in writing? It is only some sort of relief to my full heart, and shows very little of it to you; but that's something, so I let it go.—Ever, my dearest Macready, Your most affectionate Friend.

To David Roberts, R.A.

Knutsford Lodge, Great Malvern,
Twentieth March, 1851.

My dear Roberts—Mrs. Dickens has been unwell, and I am here with her. I want you to give a quarter of an hour to the perusal of the enclosed prospectus; to consider the immense value of the design, if it be successful, to artists young and old; and then to bestow your favour-

able consideration on the assistance I am going to ask of you for the sake and in the name of the cause.

For the representation of the new comedy Bulwer has written for us, to start this scheme, I am having an ingenious theatre made by Webster's people, for erection on certain nights in the Hanover Square Rooms. But it will first be put up in the Duke of Devonshire's house, where the first representation will take place before a brilliant company, including (I believe) the Queen.

Now, will you paint us a scene—the scene of which I enclose Bulwer's description from the prompter's book? It will be a cloth with a set-piece. It should be sent to your studio or put up in a theatre painting-room, as you would prefer. I have asked Stanny to do another scene, Edwin Landseer, and Louis Haghe. The Devonshire House performance will probably be on Monday, the Twenty-eighth of April. I should want to have the scenery complete by the twentieth, as it would require to be elaborately worked and rehearsed. *You* could do it in no time after sending in your pictures, and will you?

What the value of such aid would be I need not say. I say no more of the reasons that induce me to ask it, because if they are not in the prospectus they are nowhere.

On Monday and Tuesday nights I shall be in town for rehearsal, but until then I shall be here. Will you let me have a line from you in reply?—My dear Roberts,

Ever faithfully yours.

Description of the Scene proposed:

STREETS OF LONDON IN THE TIME OF GEORGE I.

In perspective, an alley inscribed DEADMAN'S LANE; a large, old-fashioned, gloomy, mysterious house in the corner, marked No. 1. (*This No.* 1 *Deadman's Lane has been constantly referred to in the play as the abode of a mysterious female figure, who enters masked, and passes into this house on the scene being disclosed.*) It is night, and there are moonlight mediums.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
Tuesday Morning, Twenty-fifth March, 1851.

MY DEAR BULWER—Coming home at midnight last night after our first rehearsal, I find your letter. I write to entreat you, if you make any change in the first three

acts, to let it be only of the slightest kind. Because we are now fairly under way, everybody is already drilled into his place, and in two or three rehearsals those acts will be in a tolerably presentable state

It is of vital importance that we should get the last two acts *soon*. The Queen and Prince are coming—Phipps wrote me yesterday the most earnest letter possible—the time is fearfully short, and we *must* have the comedy in such a state as that it will go like a machine. Whatever you do, for Heaven's sake don't be persuaded to endanger that!

Even at the risk of your falling into the pit with despair at beholding anything of the comedy in its present state, if you can by any possibility come down to Covent Garden Theatre to-night, do. I hope you will see in Lemon the germ of a very fine presentation of Sir Geoffrey. I think Topham, too, will do Easy admirably.

We really did wonders last night in the way of arrangements. I see the ground-plan of the first three acts distinctly. The dressing and furnishing and so forth, will be a perfect picture, and I will answer for the men in three weeks' time.—In great haste, my dear Bulwer,

Ever faithfully yours.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Devonshire Terrace,
Monday, Twenty-eighth April, 1851.

My dear Bulwer—The Duke has read the play. He asked for it a week ago, and had it. He has been at Brighton since. He called here before eleven on Saturday morning, but I was out on the play business, so I went to him at Devonshire House yesterday. He almost knows the play by heart. He is supremely delighted with it, and critically understands it. In proof of the latter part of this sentence I may mention that he had made two or three memoranda of trivial doubtful points, *every one of which had attracted our attention in rehearsal*, as I found when he showed them to me. He thoroughly understands and appreciates the comedy of the Duke—threw himself back in his chair and laughed, as I say of Walpole, "till I thought he'd have choked," about his first Duchess, who was a Percy. He suggested that he

shouldn't say: "You know how to speak to the heart of a Noble," because it was not likely that he would call himself a Noble. He thought we might close up the Porter and Softhead a little more (already done), and was so charmed and delighted to recall the comedy that he was more pleased than any boy you ever saw when I repeated two or three of the speeches in my part for him. He is coming to the rehearsal to-day (we rehearse now at Devonshire House, three days a-week, all day long), and, since he read the play, has conceived a most magnificent and noble improvement in the Devonshire House plan, by which, I dare say, we shall get another thousand or fifteen hundred pounds. There is not a grain of distrust or doubt in him. I am perfectly certain that he would confide to me, and does confide to me, his whole mind on the subject.

More than this, the Duke comes out the best man in the play. I am happy to retort to you that Stone does the honourable manly side of that pride inexpressibly better than I should have supposed possible in him. The scene where he makes that reparation to the slandered woman is *certain* to be an effect. He is *not* a jest upon the order of Dukes, but a great tribute to them. I have sat looking at the play (as you may suppose) pretty often, and carefully weighing every syllable of it. I see, in the Duke, the most estimable character in the piece. I am as sure that I represent the audience in this as I am that I hear the words when they are spoken before me. The first time that scene with Hardman was seriously done, it made an effect on the company that quite surprised and delighted me; and whenever and wherever it is done (but most of all at Devonshire House) the result will be the same.

Every one is greatly improved. I wrote an earnest note to Forster a few days ago on the subject of his being too loud and violent. He has since subdued himself with the most admirable pains, and improved the part a thousand per cent. All the points are gradually being worked and smoothed out with the utmost neatness all through the play. They are all most heartily anxious and earnest, and, upon the least hitch, will do the same thing twenty times over. The scenery, furniture, etc., are rapidly advancing towards completion, and will be beau-

tiful. The dresses are a perfect blaze of colour, and there is not a pocket-flap or a scrap of lace that has not been made according to Egg's drawings to the quarter of an inch. Every wig has been made from an old print or picture. From the Duke's snuff-box to Will's Coffee-house, you will find everything in perfect truth and keeping. I have resolved that whenever we come to a weak place in the acting, it must, somehow or other, be made a strong one. The places that I used to be most afraid of are among the best points now.

Will you come to the dress rehearsal on the Tuesday evening before the Queen's night? There will be no one present but the Duke.

I write in the greatest haste, for the rehearsal time is close at hand, and I have the master carpenter and gas-man to see before we begin.

Miss Coutts is one of the most sensible of women, and if I had not seen the Duke yesterday, I would have shown her the play directly. But there can't be any room for anxiety on the head that has troubled you so much. You may clear it from your mind as completely as the Gunpowder Plot. In great haste, ever cordially.

To W. C. Macready.

Saturday, Twenty-fourth May, 1851.

My dear Macready—We are getting in a good heap of money for the Guild. The comedy has been very much improved, in many respects, since you read it. The scene to which you refer is certainly one of the most telling in the play And there *is* a farce to be produced on Tuesday next, wherein a distinguished amateur will sustain a variety of assumption-parts, and in particular, Samuel Weller and Mrs. Gamp, of which I say no more. I am pining for Broadstairs, where the children are at present. I lurk from the sun, during the best part of the day, in a villainous compound of darkness, canvas, sawdust, general dust, stale gas (involving a vague smell of pepper), and disenchanted properties. But I hope to get down on Wednesday or Thursday.

Ah! you country gentlemen, who live at home at ease, how little do you think of us among the London fleas! But they tell me you are coming in for Dorsetshire. You

must be very careful, when you come to town to attend to your parliamentary duties, never to ask your way of people in the streets. They will misdirect you for what the vulgar call "a lark," meaning, in this connection, a jest at your expense. Always go into some respectable shop or apply to a policeman. You will know him by his being dressed in blue, with very dull silver buttons, and by the top of his hat being made of sticking-plaster. You may perhaps see in some odd place an intelligent-looking man, with a curious little wooden table before him and three thimbles on it. He will want you to bet, but don't do it. He really desires to cheat you. And don't buy at auctions where the best plated goods are being knocked down for next to nothing. These, too, are delusions. If you wish to go to the play to see real good acting (though a little more subdued than perfect tragedy should be), I would recommend you to see —— at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Anybody will show it to you. It is near the Strand, and you may know it by seeing no company whatever at any of the doors. Cab fares are eighteen pence a mile. A mile London measure is half a Dorsetshire mile, recollect. Porter is twopence per pint; what is called stout is fourpence. The Zoölogical Gardens are in the Regent's Park, and the price of admission is one shilling. Of the streets, I would recommend you to see Regent Street and the Quadrant, Bond Street, Piccadilly, Oxford Street, and Cheapside. I think these will please you after a time, though the tumult and bustle will at first bewilder you. If I can serve you in any way, pray command me. And with my best regards to your happy family, so remote from this Babel, believe me, my dear Friend,

Ever affectionately yours.

PS.—I forgot to mention just now that the black equestrian figure you will see at Charing Cross, as you go down to the House, is a statue of *King Charles the First.*

To the Hon. Mrs. Watson.

Broadstairs, Kent, *Eleventh July*, 1851.

My dear Mrs. Watson—I am so desperately indignant with you for writing me that short apology for a note, and pretending to suppose that under any circumstances

I could fail to read with interest anything *you* wrote to me, that I have more than half a mind to inflict a regular letter upon you. If I were not the gentlest of men I should do it!

Poor dear Haldimand, I have thought of him so often. That kind of decay is so inexpressibly affecting and piteous to me, that I have no words to express my compassion and sorrow. When I was at Abbotsford, I saw in a vile glass case the last clothes Scott wore. Among them an old white hat, which seemed to be tumbled and bent and broken by the uneasy, purposeless wandering, hither and thither, of his heavy head. It so embodied Lockhart's pathetic description of him when he tried to write, and laid down his pen and cried, that it associated itself in my mind with broken powers and mental weakness from that hour. I fancy Haldimand in such another, going listlessly about that beautiful place, and, remembering the happy hours we have passed with him, and his goodness and truth, I think what a dream we live in, until it seems for the moment the saddest dream that ever was dreamed. Pray tell us if you hear more of him. We really loved him.

To go to the opposite side of life, let me tell you that a week or so ago I took Charley and three of his schoolfellows down the river gipsying. I secured the services of Charley's godfather (an old friend of mine, and a noble fellow with boys), and went down to Slough, accompanied by two immense hampers from Fortnum and Mason, on (I believe) the wettest morning ever seen out of the tropics.

It cleared before we got to Slough; but the boys, who had got up at four (we being due at eleven), had horrible misgivings that we might not come, in consequence of which we saw them looking into the carriages before us, all face. They seemed to have no bodies whatever, but to be all face; their countenances lengthened to that surprising extent. When they saw us, the faces shut up as if they were upon strong springs, and their waistcoats developed themselves in the usual places. When the first hamper came out of the luggage-van, I was conscious of their dancing behind the guard; when the second came out with bottles in it, they all stood wildly on one leg. We then got a couple of flys to drive to the boat-house.

I put them in the first, but they couldn't sit still a moment, and were perpetually flying up and down like the toy figures in the sham snuff-boxes. In this order we went on to "Tom Brown's, the tailor's," where they all dressed in aquatic costume, and then to the boat-house, where they all cried in shrill chorus for "Mahogany"—a gentleman so called by reason of his sunburnt complexion, a waterman by profession. (He was likewise called during the day "Hog" and "Hogany," and seemed to be unconscious of any proper name whatsoever.) We embarked, the sun shining now, in a galley with a striped awning, which I had ordered for the purpose, and all rowing hard, went down the river. We dined in a field; what I suffered for fear those boys should get drunk, the struggles I underwent in a contest of feeling between hospitality and prudence, must ever remain untold. I feel, even now, old with the anxiety of that tremendous hour. They were very good, however. The speech of one became thick, and his eyes too like lobsters' to be comfortable, but only temporarily. He recovered, and I suppose outlived the salad he took. I have heard nothing to the contrary, and I imagine I should have been implicated on the inquest if there had been one. We had tea and rashers of bacon at a public-house, and came home, the last five or six miles in a prodigious thunderstorm. This was the great success of the day, which they certainly enjoyed more than anything else. The dinner had been great, and Mahogany had informed them, after a bottle of light champagne, that he never would come up the river "with ginger company" any more. But the getting so completely wet through was the culminating part of the entertainment. You never in your life saw such objects as they were; and their perfect unconsciousness that it was at all advisable to go home and change, or that there was anything to prevent their standing at the station two mortal hours to see me off, was wonderful. As to getting them to their dames with any sort of sense that they were damp, I abandoned the idea. I thought it a success when they went down the street as civilly as if they were just up and newly dressed, though they really looked as if you could have rubbed them to rags with a touch, like saturated curl-paper.

I am sorry you have not been able to see our play,

which I suppose you won't now, for I take it you are not going on Monday, the twenty-first, our last night in town? It is worth seeing, not for the getting up (which modesty forbids me to approve), but for the little bijou it is, in the scenery, dresses, and appointments. They are such as never can be got together again, because such men as Stanfield, Roberts, Grieve, Haghe, Egg, and others, never can be again combined in such a work. Everything has been done at its best from all sorts of authorities, and it is really very beautiful to look at.

I find I am "used up" by the Exhibition.* I don't say "there is nothing in it"—there's too much. I have only been twice; so many things bewildered me. I have a natural horror of sights, and the fusion of so many sights in one has not decreased it. I am not sure that I have seen anything but the fountain and perhaps the Amazon. It is a dreadful thing to be obliged to be false, but when any one says, "Have you seen——?" I say, "Yes," because if I don't, I know he'll explain it, and I can't bear that. —— took all the school one day. The school was composed of a hundred "infants," who got among the horses' legs in crossing to the main entrance from the Kensington Gate, and came reeling out from between the wheels of coaches undisturbed in mind. They were clinging to horses, I am told, all over the park.

When they were collected and added up by the frantic monitors, they were all right. They were then regaled with cake, etc., and went tottering and staring all over the place: the greater part wetting their forefingers and drawing a wavy pattern on every accessible object. One infant strayed. He was not missed. Ninety and nine were taken home, supposed to be the whole collection, but this particular infant went to Hammersmith. He was found by the police at night, going round and round the turnpike, which he still supposed to be a part of the Exhibition. He had the same opinion of the police, also of Hammersmith work-house, where he passed the night. When his mother came for him in the morning, he asked when it would be over? It was a great Exhibition, he said, but he thought it long.

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* The first international exhibition, London, May to October, 1851.—Ed.

As I begin to have a foreboding that you will think the same of this act of vengeance of mine, this present letter, I shall make an end of it, with my heartiest and most loving remembrances to Watson. I should have liked him of all things to have been in the Eton expedition, tell him, and to have heard a song (by the bye, I have forgotten that) sung in the thunderstorm, solos by Charley, chorus by the friends, describing the career of a booby who was plucked at college, every verse ending:

> I don't care a fig what the people may think,
> But what WILL the governor say!

which was shouted with a deferential jollity towards myself, as a governor who had that day done a creditable action, and proved himself worthy of all confidence.—Ever, dear Mrs. Watson, Most sincerely yours.

To Henry Austin.

Broadstairs, *Sunday, Seventh September*, 1851.

My dear Henry—I am in that state of mind which you may (once) have seen described in the newspapers as "bordering on distraction"; the house * given up to me, the fine weather going on (soon to break, I dare say), the painting season oozing away, my new book waiting to be born, and

NO WORKMEN ON THE PREMISES,

along of my not hearing from you!! I have torn all my hair off, and constantly beat my unoffending family. Wild notions have occurred to me of sending in my own plumber to do the drains. Then I remember that you have probably written to prepare *your* man, and restrain my audacious hand. Then Stone† presents himself, with a most exasperatingly mysterious visage, and says that a rat has appeared in the kitchen, and it's his opinion (Stone's, not the rat's) that the drains want "compoing"; for the use of which explicit language I could fell him without remorse. In my horrible desire to "compo" everything, the very postman becomes my enemy be-

* Tavistock House. Henry Austin, Dickens's brother-in-law, an architect, superintended the improvements.—Ed.

† Frank Stone formerly occupied the house.—Ed.

cause he brings no letter from you; and, in short, I don't see what's to become of me unless I hear from you to-morrow, which I have not the least expectation of doing.

Going over the house again, I have materially altered the plans—abandoned conservatory and front balcony—decided to make Stone's painting-room the drawing-room (it is nearly six inches higher than the room below), to carry the entrance passage right through the house to a back door leading to the garden, and to reduce the once intended drawing-room—now school-room—to a manageable size, making a door of communication between the new drawing-room and the study. Curtains and carpets, on a scale of awful splendour and magnitude, are already in preparation, and still—still—

NO WORKMEN ON THE PREMISES.

To pursue this theme is madness. Where are you? When are you coming home? Where is THE man who is to do the work? Does he know that an army of artificers must be turned in at once, and the whole thing finished out of hand? O rescue me from my present condition. Come up to the scratch, I entreat and implore you!

I send this to Lætitia to forward,

Being, as you well know why,
Completely floored by N. W., I
Sleep.

I hope you may be able to read this. My state of mind does not admit of coherence. Ever affectionately.

PS.—No WORKMEN ON THE PREMISES!
Ha! ha! ha! (I am laughing demoniacally.)

To Frank Stone.

Eighth September, 1851.

You never saw such a sight as the sands between this and Margate presented yesterday. This day fortnight a steamer laden with cattle going from Rotterdam to the London market, was wrecked on the Goodwin—on which occasion, by the bye, the coming in at night of our Salvage Luggers laden with dead cattle, which were hoisted up upon the pier, where they lay in heaps, was a most picturesque and striking sight. The sea since Wednesday

has been very rough, blowing in straight upon the land. Yesterday, the shore was strewn with hundreds of oxen, sheep, and pigs (and with bushels upon bushels of apples), in every state and stage of decay—burst open, rent asunder, lying with their stiff hoofs in the air, or with their great ribs yawning like the wrecks of ships—tumbled and beaten out of shape, and yet with a horrible sort of humanity about them. Hovering among these carcases was every kind of water-side plunderer, pulling the horns out, getting the hides off, chopping the hoofs with pole-axes, etc. etc.; attended by end no of donkey carts, and spectral horses with scraggy necks, galloping wildly up and down as if there were something maddening in the stench. I never beheld such a demoniacal business!

Very faithfully yours.

To Henry Austin.

Broadstairs, *Monday, Eighth September*, 1851.

My dear Henry—Your letter, received this morning, has considerably allayed the anguish of my soul. Our letters crossed, of course, as letters under such circumstances always do.

I am perpetually wandering (in fancy) up and down the house and tumbling over the workmen; when I feel that they are gone to dinner I become low, when I look forward to their total abstinence on Sundays, I am wretched. The gravy at dinner has a taste of glue in it. I smell paint in the sea. Phantom lime attends me all the day long. I dream that I am a carpenter and can't partition off the hall. I frequently dance (with a distinguished company) in the drawing-room, and fall in the kitchen for want of a pillar.

A great to-do here. A steamer lost on the Goodwins yesterday, and our men bringing in no end of dead cattle and sheep. I stood a supper for them last night, to the unbounded gratification of Broadstairs. They came in from the wreck very wet and tired, and very much disconcerted by the nature of their prize—which, I suppose, after all, will have to be recommitted to the sea, when the hides and tallow are secured. One lean-faced boatman murmured, when they were all ruminative over the

bodies as they lay on the pier: "Couldn't sassages be made on it?" but retired in confusion shortly afterwards, overwhelmed by the execrations of the bystanders.

Ever affectionately.

PS.—Sometimes I think ——'s bill will be too long to be added up until Babbage's calculating-machine shall be improved and finished. Sometimes that there is not paper enough ready made, to carry it over and bring it forward upon.

I dream, also, of the workmen every night. They make faces at me, and won't do anything.

To Henry Austin.

Broadstairs, Kent, *Seventh October*, 1851.

My dear Henry—O! O! O! D—— the Pantechnicon. O!

I will be at Tavistock House at twelve on Saturday, and then will wait for you until I see you. If we return together—as I hope we shall—our express will start at half-past four, and we ought to dine (somewhere about Temple Bar) at three.

The infamous —— says the stoves shall be fixed to-morrow.

Oh! if this were to last long; the distraction of the new book, the whirling of the story through one's mind, escorted by workmen, the imbecility, the wild necessity of beginning to write, the not being able to do so, the, O! I should go—— O! Ever affectionately.

To Henry Austin.

Office of "Household Words,"
Saturday, Twenty-fifth October, 1851.

My dear Henry—On the day of our departure, I thought we were going—backward—at a most triumphant pace; but yesterday we rather recovered. The painters still mislaid their brushes every five minutes, and chiefly whistled in the intervals; and the carpenters (especially the Pantechnicon) continued to look sideways with one eye down pieces of wood, as if they were absorbed in the contemplation of the perspective of the

Thames Tunnel, and had entirely relinquished the vanities of this transitory world; but still there was an improvement, and it is confirmed to-day. White lime is to be seen in kitchens, the bath-room is gradually resolving itself from an abstract idea into a fact—youthful, extremely youthful, but a fact. The drawing-room encourages no hope whatever, nor the study. Staircase painted. Irish labourers howling in the school-room, but I don't know why. I see nothing. Gardener vigorously lopping the trees, and really letting in the light and air. Foreman sweet-tempered but uneasy. Inimitable hovering gloomily through the premises all day, with an idea that a little more work is done when he flits, bat-like, through the rooms, than when there is no one looking on. Catherine all over paint. Mister McCann, encountering Inimitable in doorways, fades obsequiously into areas, and there encounters him again, and swoons with confusion. Several reams of blank paper constantly spread on the drawing-room walls, and sliced off again, which looks like insanity. Two men still slinking at the new stair-rails. I think they must be learning a tune; I cannot make out any other object in their proceedings.

Since writing the above, I have been up there again, and found the young paper-hanger putting on his slippers, and looking hard at the walls of the servant's room at the top of the house, as if he meant to paper it one of these days. May Heaven prosper his intentions!

Ever affectionately.

To W. C. Macready.

Tavistock House, *Thirty-first January*, 1852.

My dear Macready—If the "taxes on knowledge" mean the stamp duty, the paper duty, and the advertisement duty, they seem to me to be unnecessarily confounded, and unfairly too.

I have already declined to sign a petition for the removal of the stamp duty on newspapers. I think the reduced duty is some protection to the public against the rash and hasty launching of blackguard newspapers. I think the newspapers are made extremely accessible to the poor man at present, and that he would not derive the least benefit from the abolition of the stamp. It is

not at all clear to me, supposing he wants the "Times" a penny cheaper, that he would get it a penny cheaper if the tax were taken off. If he supposes he would get in competition two or three new journals as good to choose from, he is mistaken; not knowing the immense resources and the gradually perfective machinery necessary to the production of such a journal. It appears to me to be a fair tax enough, very little in the way of individuals, not embarrassing to the public in its mode of being levied, and requiring some small consideration and pauses from the American kind of newspaper projectors. Further, a committee has reported in favour of the repeal, and the subject may be held to need no present launching.

The repeal of the paper duty would benefit the producers of periodicals immensely. It would make a very large difference to me, in the case of such a journal as "Household Words." But the gain to the public would be very small. It would not make the difference of enabling me, for example, to reduce the price of "Household Words," by its fractional effect upon a copy, or to increase the quantity of matter. I might, in putting the difference into my pocket, improve the quality of the paper a little, but not one man in a thousand would notice it. It *might* (though I am not sure even of this) remove the difficulties in the way of a deserving periodical with a small sale. Charles Knight holds that it would. But the case, on the whole, appeared to me so slight, when I went to Downing Street with a deputation on the subject, that I said (in addressing the Chancellor of the Exchequer) I could not honestly maintain it for a moment as against the soap duty, or any other pressing on the mass of the poor.

The advertisement duty has this preposterous anomaly, that a footman in want of a place pays as much in the way of tax for the expression of his want, as Professor Holloway pays for the whole list of his miraculous cures.

But I think, at this time especially, there is so much to be considered in the necessity the country will be under of having money, and the necessity of justice it is always under, to consider the physical and moral wants of the poor man's home, as to justify a man in saying: "I must wait a little, all taxes are more or less objectionable, and so no doubt are these, but we must have some; and I

have not made up my mind that all these things that are mixed up together *are* taxes on knowledge in reality."

We are always with you in spirit, and always talking about you. I am obliged to conclude very hastily, being beset to-day with business engagements. Saw the lecture and was delighted; thought the idea admirable. Again, loves upon loves to dear Mrs. Macready and to Miss Macready also, and Kate and all the house. I saw —— play (O Heaven!) "Macbeth," the other night, in three hours and fifty minutes, which is quick, I think.

Ever and always affectionately.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Tavistock House, *Sunday Night, Fifteenth February*, 1852.

My dear Bulwer—I left Liverpool at four o'clock this morning, and am so blinded by excitement, gas, and waving hats and handkerchiefs, that I can hardly see to write, but I cannot go to bed without telling you what a triumph we have had. Allowing for the necessarily heavy expenses of all kinds, I believe we can hardly fund less than a Thousand Pounds out of this trip alone. And, more than that, the extraordinary interest taken in the idea of the Guild by "this grand people of England" down in these vast hives, and the enthusiastic welcome they give it, assure me that we may do what we will if we will only be true and faithful to our design. There is a social recognition of it which I cannot give you the least idea of. I sincerely believe that we have the ball at our feet, and may throw it up to the very Heaven of Heavens. And I don't speak for myself alone, but for all our people, and not least of all for Forster, who has been absolutely stunned by the tremendous earnestness of these great places.

To tell you (especially after your affectionate letter) what I would have given to have had you there would be idle. But I can most seriously say that all the sights of the earth turned pale in my eyes, before the sight of three thousand people with one heart among them, and no capacity in them, in spite of all their efforts, of sufficiently testifying to you how they believe you to be right, and feel that they cannot do enough to cheer you

on. They understood the play (*far better acted by this time than ever you have seen it*) as well as you do. They allowed nothing to escape them. They rose up, when it was over, with a perfect fury of delight, and the Manchester people sent a requisition after us to Liverpool to say that if we will go back there in May, when we act at Birmingham, (as of course we shall) they will joyfully undertake to fill the Free Trade Hall again. Among the Tories of Liverpool the reception was equally enthusiastic. We played, two nights running, to a hall crowded to the roof—more like the opera at Genoa or Milan than anything else I can compare it to. We dined at the Town Hall magnificently, and it made no difference in the response. I said what we were quietly determined to do (when the Guild was given as the toast of the night), and really they were so noble and generous in their encouragement that I should have been more ashamed of myself than I hope I ever shall be, if I could have felt conscious of having ever for a moment faltered in the work.

I will answer for Birmingham—for any great working town to which we chose to go. We have won a position for the idea which years upon years of labour could not have given it. I believe its worldly fortunes have been advanced in this last week fifty years at least. I feebly express to you what Forster (who couldn't be at Liverpool, and has not those shouts ringing in his ears) has felt from the moment he set foot in Manchester. Believe me we may carry a perfect fiery cross through the North of England, and over the Border, in this cause, if need be—not only to the enrichment of the cause, but to the lasting enlistment of the people's sympathy.

I have been so happy in all this that I could have cried on the shortest notice any time since Tuesday. And I do believe that our whole body would have gone to the North Pole with me if I had shown them good reason for it.

I hope I am not so tired but that you may be able to read this. I have been at it almost incessantly, day and night for a week, and I am afraid my handwriting suffers. But in all other respects I am only a giant refreshed.

We meet next Saturday you recollect? Until then, and ever afterwards, Believe me, heartily yours.

To the Hon. Mrs. Watson.

10 Camden Crescent, Dover, *Fifth August*, 1852.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. WATSON *

My dear, dear Mrs. Watson—I cannot bear to be silent longer, though I know full well—no one better, I think—how your love for him, and your trust in God, and your love for your children will have come to the help of such a nature as yours, and whispered better things than any friendship can, however faithful and affectionate.

We held him so close in our hearts—all of us here—and have been so happy with him, and so used to say how good he was, and what a gentle, generous, noble spirit he had, and how he shone out among commoner men as something so real and genuine, and full of every kind of worthiness, that it has often brought the tears into my eyes to talk of him; we have been so accustomed to do this when we looked forward to years of unchanged intercourse, that now, when everything but truth goes down into the dust, those recollections which make the sword so sharp pour balm into the wound. And if it be a consolation to us to know the virtues of his character, and the reasons that we had for loving him, O how much greater is your comfort who were so devoted to him, and were the happiness of his life!

We have thought of you every day and every hour; we think of you now in the dear old house, and know how right it is, for his dear children's sake, that you should have bravely set up your rest in the place consecrated by their father's memory, and within the same summer shadows that fall upon his grave. We try to look on, through a few years, and to see the children brightening it, and George a comfort and a pride and an honour to you; and although it *is* hard to think of what we have lost, we know how something of it will be restored by your example and endeavours, and the blessing that will descend upon them. We know how the

* Dickens's affection for Mr. and Mrs. Watson was shown in the dedication to them of his own favourite of all his books, "David Copperfield."—Ed.

time will come when some reflection of that cordial, unaffected, most affectionate presence, which we can never forget, and never would forget if we could—such is God's great mercy—will shine out of your boy's eyes upon you, his best friend and his last consoler, and fill the void there is now.

May God, who has received into His rest through this affliction as good a man as ever I can know and love and mourn for on this earth, be good to you, dear friends, through these coming years! May all those compassionate and hopeful lessons of the great Teacher who shed divine tears for the dead bring their full comfort to you! I have no fear of that, my confidence is certainty.

I cannot write what I wish; I had so many things to say, I seem to have said none. It is so with the remembrances we send. I cannot put them into words.

If you should ever set up a record in the little church, I would try to word it myself, and God knows out of the fulness of my heart, if you should think it well.—My dear Friend, Yours, with the truest affection and sympathy.

To W. C. Macready.

Hôtel des Bains, Boulogne,
Tuesday Night, Fifth October, 1852.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. MACREADY

My dearest Macready—I received your melancholy letter while we were staying at Dover, a few days after it was written; but I thought it best not to write to you until you were at home again, among your dear children.

Its tidings were not unexpected to us, had been anticipated in many conversations, often thought of under many circumstances; but the shock was scarcely lessened by this preparation. The many happy days we have passed together came crowding back; all the old cheerful times arose before us; and the remembrance of what we had loved so dearly and seen under so many aspects—all natural and delightful and affectionate and ever to be cherished—was, how pathetic and touching you know best!

But my dear, dear Macready, this is not the first time you have felt that the recollection of great love and hap-

piness associated with the dead soothes while it wounds. And while I can imagine that the blank beside you may grow wider every day for many days to come, I *know*—I think—that from its depths such comfort will arise as only comes to great hearts like yours, when they can think upon their trials with a steady trust in God.

My dear friend, I have known her so well, have been so happy in her regard, have been so light-hearted with her, have interchanged so many tender remembrances of you with her when you were far away, and have seen her ever so simply and truly anxious to be worthy of you, that I cannot write as I would and as I know I ought. As I would press your hand in your distress, I let this note go from me. I understand your grief, I deeply feel the reason that there is for it, yet in that very feeling find a softening consolation that must spring up a hundred-thousandfold for you. May Heaven prosper it in your breast, and the spirits that have gone before, from the regions of mercy to which they have been called, smooth the path you have to tread alone! Children are left to you. Your good sister (God bless her!) is by your side. You have devoted friends, and more reasons than most men to be self-reliant and steadfast. Something is gone that never in this world can be replaced, but much is left, and it is a part of her life, her death, her immortality.

Catherine and Georgina, who are with me here, send you their overflowing love and sympathy. We hope that in a little while, and for a little while at least, you will come among us, who have known the happiness of being in this bond with you, and will not exclude us from participation in your past and future.—Ever, my dearest Macready, with unchangeable affection,

Yours in all love and truth.

To the Hon. Mrs. Watson.

Athenæum, *Monday, Twenty-second November*, 1852.

My dear Mrs. Watson—Having just now finished my work for the time being, I turn in here in the course of a rainy walk, to have the gratification of writing a few lines to you. If my occupations with this same right

hand were less numerous, you would soon be tired of me, I should write to you so often.

You ask Catherine a question about "Bleak House." Its circulation is half as large again as "Copperfield"! I have just now come to the point I have been patiently working up to in the writing, and I hope it will suggest to you a pretty and affecting thing. In the matter of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," I partly though not entirely agree with Mr. James. No doubt a much lower art will serve for the handling of such a subject in fiction, than for a launch on the sea of imagination without such a powerful bark; but there are many points in the book very admirably done. There is a certain St. Clair, a New Orleans gentleman, who seems to me to be conceived with great power and originality. If he had not "a Grecian outline of face," which I began to be a little tired of in my earliest infancy, I should think him unexceptionable. He has a sister too, a maiden lady from New England, in whose person the besetting weaknesses and prejudices of the Abolitionists themselves, on the subject of the blacks, are set forth in the liveliest and truest colours, and with the greatest boldness.

I have written for "Household Words" of this next publication-day an article on the State funeral,* showing why I consider it altogether a mistake, to be temperately but firmly objected to; which I dare say will make a good many of the admirers of such things highly indignant. It may have right and reason on its side, however, none the less.

Charley and I had a great talk at Dover about his going into the army, when I thought it right to set before him fairly and faithfully the objections to that career, no less than its advantages. The result was that he asked in a very manly way for time to consider. So I appointed to go down to Eton on a certain day at the beginning of this month, and resume the subject. We resumed it accordingly at the White Hart, at Windsor, and he came to the conclusion that he would rather be a merchant, and try to establish some good house of business, where he might find a path perhaps for his younger brothers, and stay at home, and make himself the head

* The Duke of Wellington's funeral.—Ed.

of that long, small procession. I was very much pleased with him indeed; he showed a fine sense and a fine feeling in the whole matter. We have arranged, therefore, that he shall leave Eton at Christmas, and go to Germany after the holidays, to become well acquainted with that language, now most essential in such a walk of life as he will probably tread.

And I think this is the whole of my news. We are always talking of you at home. Mary Boyle dined with us a little while ago. You look out, I imagine, on a waste of water. When I came from Windsor, I thought I must have made a mistake and got into a boat (in the dark) instead of a railway carriage. I am ever, with the best and truest wishes of my heart, my dear Mrs. Watson,

Your most affectionate Friend.

To W. H. Wills.

Tavistock House, *Thursday, Ninth December*, 1852.

My dear Wills—I am driven mad by dogs, who have taken it into their accursed heads to assemble every morning in the piece of ground opposite, and who have barked this morning *for five hours without intermission;* positively rendering it impossible for me to work, and so making what is really ridiculous quite serious to me. I wish, between this and dinner, you would send John to see if he can hire a gun, with a few caps, some powder, and a few charges of small shot. If you duly commission him with a card, he can easily do it. And if I get those implements up here to-night, I'll be the death of some of them to-morrow morning. Ever faithfully.

To W. H. Wills.*

Office of "Household Words," *Christmas Eve*, 1852.

My dear Wills—I have gone carefully through the number—an awful one for the amount of correction required—and have made everything right. If my mind could have been materialised, and drawn along the tops

* Assistant editor of "Household Words."—Ed.

of all the spikes on the outside of the Queen's Bench prison, it could not have been more agonised than by the ——, which, for imbecility, carelessness, slovenly composition, relatives without antecedents, universal chaos, and one absorbing whirlpool of jolter-headedness, beats anything in print and paper I have ever "gone at" in my life.

* * * * * *

Ever faithfully yours.

To Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

H.M.S. *Tavistock, Second January,* 1853.

Yoho, old salt! Neptun' ahoy! You don't forget, messmet, as you was to meet Dick Sparkler and Mark Porpuss on the fok'sle of the good ship Owssel Words, Wednesday next, half-past four? Not you; for when did Stanfell ever pass his word to go anywheers and not come? Well. Belay, my heart of oak, belay! Come alongside the Tavistock same day and hour, 'stead of Owssel Words. Hail your shipmets, and they'll drop over the side and join you, like two new shillings a-droppin' into the purser's pocket. Damn all lubberly boys and swabs, and give *me* the lad with the tarry trousers, which shines to me like di'mings bright!

To W. H. Wills.

Château des Moulineaux, Boulogne,
Saturday Night, Eighteenth June, 1853.

"Bleak House"

My dear Wills—Thank God I have done half the number with great care, and hope to finish on Thursday or Friday next. O how thankful I feel to be able to have done it, and what a relief to get the number out!

General Movements of Inimitable

I don't think (I am not sure) I shall come to London until after the completion of "Bleak House," No. 18—the number after this now in hand—for it strikes me that I am better here at present. I have picked up in the

most extraordinary manner, and I believe you would never suppose to look at me that I had had that week or barely an hour of it. If there should be any occasion for our meeting in the mean time, a run over here would do you no harm, and we should be delighted to see you at any time. If you suppose this place to be in a street, you are much mistaken. It is in the country, though not more than ten minutes' walk from the post-office, and is the best doll's house of many rooms, in the prettiest French grounds, in the most charming situation I have ever seen; the best place I have ever lived in abroad, except at Genoa. You can scarcely imagine the beauty of the air in this richly-wooded hillside. As to comforts in the house, there are all sorts of things, beginning with no end of the coldest water and running through the most beautiful flowers down to English foot-baths and a Parisian liqueur-stand. I think that's all at present.—Ever, my dear Wills, Faithfully yours.

To Frank Stone, A.R.A.

Château des Moulineaux, Rue Beaurepaire,
Boulogne, *Thursday, Twenty-third June*, 1853.

My dear Pumpion—I take the earliest opportunity, after finishing my number—ahem! to write you a line, and to report myself (thank God!) brown, well, robust, vigorous, open to fight any man in England of my weight, and growing a moustache. Any person of undoubted pluck, in want of a customer, may hear of me at the bar of Bleak House, where my money is down.

I think there is an abundance of places here that would suit you well enough; and Georgina is ready to launch on voyages of discovery and observation with you. But it is necessary that you should consider for how long a time you want it, as the folks here let much more advantageously for the tenant when they know the term —don't like to let without. It seems to me that the best thing you can do is to get a paper of the South Eastern tidal trains, fix your day for coming over here in five hours, let me know the day, and come and see how you like the place. *I* like it better than ever. We can give you a bed (two to spare, at a pinch three), and show you a garden and a view or so. The town is not so cheap as

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square.
Residence of Charles Dickens, 1851–1857.

places farther off, but you get a great deal for your money, and by far the best wine at tenpence a bottle that I have ever drank anywhere. I really desire no better.

I may mention for your guidance (for I count upon your coming to overhaul the general aspect of things), that you have nothing on earth to do with your luggage when it is once in the boat, *until after you have walked ashore*. That you will be filtered with the rest of the passengers through a hideous, whitewashed, quarantine-looking custom-house, where a stern man of military aspect will demand your passport. That you will have nothing of the sort, but will produce your card with this addition: "Restant à Boulogne, chez M. Charles Dickens, Château des Moulineaux." That you will then be passed out at a little door, like one of the ill-starred prisoners on the bloody September night, into a yelling and shrieking crowd, cleaving the air with the names of the different hotels, exactly seven thousand six hundred and fifty-four in number. And that your heart will be on the point of sinking with dread, then you will find yourself in the arms of the Sparkler of Albion. Ever affectionately.

To Walter Savage Landor.

Tavistock House, London, *Eighth September*, 1853.

My dear Landor—I am in town for a day or two, and Forster tells me I may now write to thank you for the happiness you have given me by honouring my name with such generous mention, on such a noble place, in your great book. I believe he has told you already that I wrote to him from Boulogne, not knowing what to do, as I had not received the precious volume, and feared you might have some plan of sending it to me, with which my premature writing would interfere.

You know how heartily and inexpressibly I prize what you have written to me, or you never would have selected me for such a distinction. I could never thank you enough, my dear Landor, and I will not thank you in words any more. Believe me, I receive the dedication like a great dignity, the worth of which I hope I thoroughly know. The Queen could give me none in exchange that I wouldn't laughingly snap my fingers at.

Walter * is a very good boy, and comes home from school with honourable commendation. He passed last Sunday in solitary confinement (in a bath-room) on bread and water, for terminating a dispute with the nurse by throwing a chair in her direction. It is the very first occasion of his ever having got into trouble, for he is a great favourite with the whole house, and one of the most amiable boys in the boy-world. (He comes out on birthdays in a blaze of shirt-pin.)

If I go and look at your house, as I shall if I go to Florence, I shall bring you back another leaf from the same tree as I plucked the last from.—Ever, my dear Landor, Heartily and affectionately yours.

To John Delane.†

Villa des Moulineaux, Boulogne,
Monday, Twelfth September, 1853.

* * * * * *

We remain here until the tenth of next month, when I am going to desert my wife and family and run about Italy until Christmas. If I can execute any little commission for you or Mrs. Delane—in the Genoa streets of silversmiths, or anywhere else—I shall be delighted to do so. I have been in the receipt of several letters from Macready lately, and rejoice to find him quite himself again, though I have great misgivings that he will lose his eldest boy before he can be got to India.

I never saw anything so ridiculous as this place at present. They expected the Emperor ten or twelve days ago, and put up all manner of triumphal arches made of evergreens, which look like tea-leaves now, and will take a withered and weird appearance hardly to be foreseen, long before the twenty-fifth, when the visit is vaguely expected to come off. In addition to these faded garlands all over the leading streets, there are painted eagles hoisted over gateways and sprawling across a hundred ways, which have been washed out by the rain and are now being blistered by the sun, until they look horribly

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* Dickens's son, named for Landor.—Ed.
† Editor of the London "Times."—Ed.

ludicrous. And a number of our benighted compatriots who came over to see a perfect blaze of *fêtes*, go wandering among these shrivelled preparations and staring at ten thousand flag-poles without any flags upon them, with a kind of indignant curiosity and personal injury quite irresistible.—With many thanks,

Very faithfully yours.

To Lord John Russell.

Villa des Moulineaux, Boulogne,
Wednesday, Twenty-first September, 1853.

My dear Lord—Your note having been forwarded to me here, I cannot forbear thanking you with all my heart for your great kindness. Mr. Forster had previously sent me a copy of your letter to him, together with the expression of the high and lasting gratification he had in your handsome response. I know he feels it most sincerely.

I became the prey of a perfect spasm of sensitive twinges, when I found that the close of "Bleak House" had not penetrated to "the wilds of the North" when your letter left those parts. I was so very much interested in it myself when I wrote it here last month, that I have a fond sort of faith in its interesting its readers. But for the hope that you may have got it by this time, I should refuse comfort. That supports me.

I fear there is not much chance of my being able to execute any little commission for Lady John anywhere in Italy. But I am going across the Alps, returning home to London for Christmas Day, and should indeed be happy if I could do her any dwarf service.

You will be interested, I think, to hear that Poole * lives happily on his pension, and lives within it. He is quite incapable of any mental exertion, and what he would have done without it I cannot imagine. I send it to him at Paris every quarter. It is something, even amid the estimation in which you are held, which is but a foreshadowing of what shall be by and by as the people

* John Poole, the playwright, in his old age received a pension of £100, for which he was indebted to the interest of Lord John Russell and the good offices of Dickens.—Ed.

advance, to be so gratefully remembered, as he, with the best reason, remembers you. Forgive my saying this. But the manner of that transaction, no less than the matter, is always fresh in my memory in association with your name, and I cannot help it.—My dear Lord,

Yours very faithfully and obliged.

To Mrs. Charles Dickens.

Hôtel de Londres, Chamounix,
Thursday Night, Twentieth October, 1853.

My dearest Kate—We came here last night after a very long journey over very bad roads, from Geneva, and leave here (for Martigny, by the Tête Noire) at six to-morrow morning. Next morning early we mean to try the Simplon.

After breakfast to-day we ascended to the Mer de Glace—wonderfully different at this time of the year from when we saw it—a great portion of the ascent being covered with snow, and the climbing very difficult. Regardless of my mule, I walked up and walked down again, to the great admiration of the guides, who pronounced me "an Intrepid." The little house at the top being closed for the winter, and Edward * having forgotten to carry any brandy, we had nothing to drink at the top—which was a considerable disappointment to the Inimitable, who was streaming with perspiration from head to foot. But we made a fire in the snow with some sticks, and after a not too comfortable rest came down again. It took a long time—from ten to three.

The appearance of Chamonix at this time of the year is very remarkable. The travellers are over for the season, the inns are generally shut up, all the people who can afford it are moving off to Geneva, the snow is low on the mountains, and the general desolation and grandeur extraordinarily fine. I wanted to pass by the Col de Balme, but the snow lies too deep upon it.

You would have been quite delighted if you could have seen the warmth of our old Lausanne friends, and the heartiness with which they crowded down on a fearfully bad morning to see us off. We passed the night at the

* Dickens's courier.—Ed.

Ecu de Genève, in the rooms once our old rooms—at that time (the day before yesterday) occupied by the Queen of the French (ex- I mean) and Prince Joinville and his family.

Tell Sydney that all the way here from Geneva, and up to the Sea of Ice this morning, I wore his knitting, which was very comfortable indeed. I mean to wear it on the long mule journey to Martigny to-morrow.

We get on extremely well. Edward continues as before. He had never been here, and I took him up to the Mer de Glace this morning, and had a mule for him.

I shall leave this open, as usual, to add a word or two on our arrival at Martigny. We have had an amusingly absurd incident this afternoon. When we came here, I saw added to the hotel—our old hotel, and I am now writing in the room where we once dined at the table d'hôte —some baths, cold and hot, down on the margin of the torrent below. This induced us to order three hot baths. Thereupon the keys of the bath-rooms were found with immense difficulty, women ran backwards and forwards across the bridge, men bore in great quantities of wood, a horrible furnace was lighted, and a smoke was raised which filled the whole valley. This began at half-past three, and we congratulated each other on the distinction we should probably acquire by being the cause of the conflagration of the whole village. We sat by the fire until half-past five (dinner-time), and still no baths. Then Edward came up to say that the water was as yet only "tippit," which we suppose to be tepid, but that by half-past eight it would be in a noble state. Ever since the smoke has poured forth in enormous volume, and the furnace has blazed, and the women have gone and come over the bridge, and piles of wood have been carried in; but we observed a general avoidance of us by the establishment which still looks like a failure. We have had a capital dinner, the dessert whereof is now on the table. When we arrived, at nearly seven last night, all the linen in the house, newly washed, was piled in the sitting-room, all the curtains were taken down, and all the chairs piled bottom upwards. They cleared away as much as they could directly, and had even got the curtains up at breakfast this morning.

I am looking forward to letters at Genoa, though I

doubt if we shall get there (supposing all things right at the Simplon) before Monday night or Tuesday morning. I found there last night what F—— would call "Mr. Smith's" story of Mont Blanc, and took it to bed to read. It is extremely well and unaffectedly done. You would be interested in it.

MARTIGNY,
Friday Afternoon, Twenty-first October.

Safely arrived here after a most delightful day, without a cloud. I walked the whole way. The scenery most beautifully presented. We are in the hotel where our old St. Bernard party assembled.

I should like to see you all very much indeed.

Ever affectionately.

To MRS. CHARLES DICKENS.

HÔTEL DE LA VILLE, MILAN,
Twenty-fifth October, 1853.

MY DEAREST CATHERINE—The road from Chamonix here takes so much more time than I supposed (for I travelled it day and night, and my companions don't at all understand the idea of never going to bed) that we only reached Milan last night, though we had been travelling twelve and fifteen hours a day. We crossed the Simplon on Sunday, when there was not (as there is not now) a particle of cloud in the whole sky, and when the pass was as nobly grand and beautiful as it possibly can be. There was a good deal of snow upon the top, but not across the road, which had been cleared. We crossed the Austrian frontier yesterday, and, both there and at the gate of Milan, received all possible consideration and politeness.

I have not seen Bairr yet. He has removed from the old hotel to a larger one at a few hours' distance. The head waiter remembered me very well last night after I had talked to him a little while, and was greatly interested in hearing about all the family, and about poor Roche. The boy we used to have at Lausanne is now seventeen-and-a-half—very tall, he says. The elder girl, fifteen, very like her mother, but taller and more beautiful. He described poor Mrs. Bairr's death (I am speaking of the head waiter before mentioned) in most viva-

cious Italian. It was all over in ten minutes, he said. She put her hands to her head one day, down in the courtyard, and cried out that she heard little bells ringing violently in her ears. They sent off for Bairr, who was close by. When she saw him, she stretched out her arms, said in English, "Adieu, my dear!" and fell dead. He has not married again, and he never will. She was a good woman (my friend went on), excellent woman, full of charity, loved the poor, but *un poco furiosa*—that was nothing!

The new hotel is just like the old one, admirably kept, excellently furnished, and a model of comfort. I hope to be at Genoa on Thursday morning, and to find your letter there. We have agreed to drop Sicily, and to return home by way of Marseilles. Our projected time for reaching London is the tenth of December.

As this house is full, I dare say we shall meet some one we know at the table d'hôte to-day. It is extraordinary that the only travellers we have encountered, since we left Paris, have been one horribly vapid Englishman and wife whom we dropped at Basle, one boring Englishman whom we found (and, thank God, left) at Geneva, and two English maiden ladies, whom we found sitting on a rock (with parasols) the day before yesterday, in the most magnificent part of the Gorge of Gondo, the most awful portion of the Simplon—there awaiting their travelling chariot, in which, with their money, their parasols, and a perfect shop of baskets, they were carefully *locked up* by an English servant in sky blue and silver buttons. We have been in the most extraordinary vehicles—like swings, like boats, like Noah's arks, like barges and enormous bedsteads. After dark last night, a landlord, where we changed horses, discovered that the luggage would certainly be stolen from *questo porco d'uno carro*—this pig of a cart—his complimentary description of our carriage, unless cords were attached to each of the trunks, which cords were to hang down so that we might hold them in our hands all the way, and feel any tug that might be made at our treasures. You will imagine the absurdity of our jolting along some twenty miles in this way, exactly as if we were in three shower-baths and were afraid to pull the string.

We are going to the Scala to-night, having got the old

box belonging to the hotel, the old key of which is lying beside me on the table. There seem to be no singers of note here now, and it appears for the time to have fallen off considerably. I shall now bring this to a close, hoping that I may have more interesting jottings to send you about the old scenes and people, from Genoa, where we shall stay two days. You are now, I take it, at Macready's. I shall be greatly interested by your account of your visit there. We often talk of you all.

Edward's Italian is (I fear) very weak. When we began to get really into the language, he reminded me of poor Roche in Germany. But he seems to have picked up a little this morning. He has been unfortunate with the unlucky Egg, leaving a pair of his shoes (his favourite shoes) behind in Paris, and his flannel dressing-gown yesterday morning at Domo d'Ossola. In all other respects he is just as he was.

Egg and Collins have gone out to kill the lions here, and I take advantage of their absence to write to you, Georgy, and Miss Coutts. Wills will have told you, I dare say, that Cerjat accompanied us on a miserably wet morning, in a heavy rain, down the lake. By the bye, the wife of one of his cousins, born in France of German parents, living in the next house to Haldimand's, is one of the most charming, natural, open-faced, and delightful women I ever saw. Madame de —— is set up as the great attraction of Lausanne; but this capital creature shuts her up altogether. We have called her (her—the real belle), ever since, the early closing movement.

I am impatient for letters from home; confused ideas are upon me that you are going to White's, but I have no notion when.

Take care of yourself, and God bless you.

Ever most affectionately.

To Miss Hogarth.

Hôtel de la Ville, Milan,
Tuesday, Twenty-fifth October, 1853.

My dear Georgy—I have walked to that extent in Switzerland (walked over the Simplon on Sunday, as an addition to the other feats) that one pair of the new strong shoes has gone to be mended this morning, and

the other is in but a poor way; the snow having played the mischief with them.

On the Swiss side of the Simplon, we slept at the beastliest little town, in the wildest kind of house, where some fifty cats tumbled into the corridor outside our bedrooms all at once in the middle of the night—whether through the roof or not I don't know; for it was dark when we got up—and made such a horrible and terrific noise that we started out of our beds in a panic. I strongly objected to opening the door lest they should get into the room and tear at us; but Edward opened his, and laid about him until he dispersed them. At Domo d'Ossola we had three immense bedrooms (Egg's bed twelve feet wide!), and a sala of imperceptible extent in the dim light of two candles and a wood fire; but were very well and very cheaply entertained. Here we are, as you know, housed in the greatest comfort.

We continue to get on very well together. We really do admirably. I lose no opportunity of inculcating the lesson that it is of no use to be out of temper in travelling, and it is very seldom wanted for any of us. Egg is an excellent fellow, and full of good qualities; I am sure a generous and staunch man at heart, and a good and honourable nature.

I shall hope to hear from you and shall be very glad indeed to do so. No more at present.

Ever most affectionately.

To Miss Hogarth.

Hôtel des Étrangers, Naples,
Friday Night, Fourth November, 1853.

My dearest Georgy—Instead of embarking on Monday at Genoa, we were delayed (in consequence of the boat's being a day later when there are thirty-one days in the month) until Tuesday. Going aboard that morning at half-past nine, we found the steamer more than full of passengers from Marseilles, and in a state of confusion not to be described. We could get no places at the table, got our dinners how we could on deck, had no berths or sleeping accommodation of any kind, and paid heavy first-class fares! To add to this, we got to Leghorn too late to steam away again that night, getting

the ship's papers examined first—as the authorities said so, not being favourable to the new express English ship, English officered—and we lay off the lighthouse all night long. The scene on board beggars description. Ladies on the tables, gentlemen under the tables, and ladies and gentlemen lying indiscriminately on the open deck, arrayed like spoons on a sideboard. No mattresses, no blankets, nothing. Towards midnight, attempts were made by means of an awning and flags to make this latter scene remotely approach an Australian encampment; and we three lay together on the bare planks covered with overcoats. We were all gradually dozing off when a perfectly tropical rain fell, and in a moment drowned the whole ship. The rest of the night was passed upon the stairs, with an immense jumble of men and women. When anybody came up for any purpose we all fell down; and when anybody came down we all fell up again. Still, the good-humour in the English part of the passengers was quite extraordinary. There were excellent officers aboard, and the first mate lent me his cabin to wash in in the morning, which I afterwards lent to Egg and Collins. Then we and the Emerson Tennents (who were aboard) and the captain, the doctor, and the second officer went off on a jaunt together to Pisa, as the ship was to lie at Leghorn all day.

The captain was a capital fellow, but I led him, facetiously, such a life all day, that I got almost everything altered at night. Emerson Tennent, with the greatest kindness, turned his son out of his stateroom (who, indeed, volunteered to go in the most amiable manner), and I got a good bed there. The store-room down by the hold was opened for Egg and Collins, and they slept with the moist sugar, the cheese in cut, the spices, the cruets, the apples and pears—in a perfect chandler's shop; in company with what the ——'s would call a "hold gent" —who had been so horribly wet through overnight that his condition frightened the authorities—a cat, and the steward—who dozed in an armchair, and all night long fell headforemost, once in every five minutes, on Egg, who slept on the counter or dresser. Last night I had the steward's own cabin, opening on deck, all to myself. It had been previously occupied by some desolate lady, who went ashore at Civita Vecchia. There was little or no sea,

thank Heaven, all the trip; but the rain was heavier than any I have ever seen, and the lightning very constant and vivid. We were, with the crew, some two hundred people; with boats, at the utmost stretch, for one hundred perhaps, I could not help thinking what would happen if we met with any accident; the crew being chiefly Maltese, and evidently fellows who would cut off alone in the largest boat on the least alarm. The speed (it being the crack express ship for the India mail) very high; also the running through all the narrow rocky channels. Thank God, however, here we are; though the more sensible and experienced part of the passengers agreed with me this morning that it was not a thing to try often. We had an excellent table after the first day, the best wines and so forth, and the captain and I swore eternal friendship. Ditto the first officer and the majority of the passengers. We got into the bay about seven this morning, but could not land until noon. We towed from Civita Vecchia the entire Greek navy, I believe, consisting of a little brig-of-war, with great guns, fitted as a steamer, but disabled by having burst the bottom of her boiler in her first run. She was just big enough to carry the captain and a crew of six or so, but the captain was so covered with buttons and gold that there never would have been room for him on board to put these valuables away if he hadn't worn them, which he consequently did, all night.

Whenever anything was wanted to be done, as slackening the tow-rope or anything of that sort, our officers roared at this miserable potentate, in violent English, through a speaking-trumpet, of which he couldn't have understood a word under the most favourable circumstances, so he did all the wrong things first, and the right things always last. The absence of any knowledge of anything not English on the part of the officers and stewards was most ridiculous. I met an Italian gentleman on the cabin steps, yesterday morning, vainly endeavouring to explain that he wanted a cup of tea for his sick wife. And when we were coming out of the harbour at Genoa, and it was necessary to order away that boat of music you remember, the chief officer (called aft for the purpose, as "knowing something of Italian,") delivered himself in this explicit and clear manner to the

principal performer: "Now, signora, if you don't sheer off, you'll be run down; so you had better trice up that guitar of yours, and put about."

We get on as well as possible, and it is extremely pleasant and interesting, and I feel that the change is doing me great and real service, after a long continuous strain upon the mind; but I am pleased to think that we are at our farthest point, and I look forward with joy to coming home again, to my old room, and the old walks, and all the old pleasant things.

I wish I had arranged, or could have done so—for it would not have been easy—to find some letters here. It is a blank to stay for five days in a place without any.

I am afraid this is a dull letter, for I am very tired. You must take the will for the deed, my dear, and good-night. Ever most affectionately.

To Miss Hogarth.

Venice, *Friday, Twenty-fifth November*, 1853.

My dearest Georgy—We found an English carriage from Padua at Florence, and hired it to bring it back again. We travelled post with four horses all the way (from Padua to this place there is a railroad) and travelled all night. We left Florence at half-past six in the morning, and got to Padua at eleven next day—yesterday. The cold at night was most intense. I don't think I have ever felt it colder. But our carriage was very comfortable, and we had some wine and some rum to keep us warm. We came by Bologna (where we had tea) and Ferrara. You may imagine the delays in the night when I tell you that each of our passports, after receiving *six visés* at Florence, received in the course of the one night, *nine more*, every one of which was written and sealed; somebody being slowly knocked out of bed to do it every time! It really was excruciating.

Landor had sent me a letter to his son, and on the day before we left Florence I thought I would go out to Fiesoli and leave it. So I got a little one-horse open carriage and drove off alone. We were within half a mile of the Villa Landoro, and were driving down a very narrow lane like one of those at Albaro, when I saw an elderly lady coming towards us, very well dressed in silk of the

Queen's blue, and walking freshly and briskly against the wind at a good round pace. It was a bright, cloudless, very cold day, and I thought she walked with great spirit, as if she enjoyed it. I also thought (perhaps that was having him in my mind) that her ruddy face was shaped like Landor's. All of a sudden the coachman pulls up, and looks inquiringly at me. "What's the matter?" says I. "Eccoa la Signora Landoro?" says he. "For the love of Heaven, don't stop," says I. "*I* don't know her, I am only going to the house to leave a letter—go on!" Meanwhile she (still coming on) looked at me, and I looked at her, and we were both a good deal confused, and so went our several ways. Altogether, I think it was as disconcerting a meeting as I ever took part in, and as odd a one. Under any other circumstances I should have introduced myself, but the separation made the circumstances so peculiar that "I didn't like."

The Plornishghenter * is evidently the greatest, noblest, finest, cleverest, brightest, and most brilliant of boys. Your account of him is most delightful, and I hope to find another letter from you somewhere on the road, making me informed of his demeanour on your return. On which occasion, as on every other, I have no doubt he will have distinguished himself as an irresistibly attracting, captivating May-Roon-Ti-Goon-Ter. Give him a good many kisses for me. I quite agree with Syd as to his ideas of paying attention to the old gentleman. It's not bad, but deficient in originality. The usual deficiency of an inferior intellect with so great a model before him. I am very curious to see whether the Plorn remembers me on my reappearance.

* * * * * *

Most affectionately yours.

To M. de Cerjat.

Tavistock House, *Monday, Sixteenth January*, 1854.

My dear Cerjat—Guilty. The accused pleads guilty, but throws himself upon the mercy of the court. He humbly represents that his usual hour for getting up, in

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* Dickens's youngest son, Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens, born in 1852.—Ed.

the course of his travels, was three o'clock in the morning, and his usual hour for going to bed, nine or ten the next night. That the places in which he chiefly deviated from these rules of hardship, were Rome and Venice; and that at those cities of fame he shut himself up in solitude, and wrote Christmas papers for the incomparable publication known as "Household Words." That his correspondence at all times, arising out of the business of the said "Household Words" alone, was very heavy. That his offence, though undoubtedly committed, was unavoidable, and that a nominal punishment will meet the justice of the case.

We had only three bad days out of the whole time. After Naples, which was very hot, we had very cold, clear, bright weather. When we got to Chamounix, we found the greater part of the inns shut up and the people gone. No visitors whatsoever, and plenty of snow. These were the very best circumstances under which to see the place, and we stayed a couple of days at the Hôtel de Londres (hastily re-furbished for our entertainment), and climbed through the snow to the Mer de Glace, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Then we went, in mule procession (I walking), to the old hotel at Martigny, where Collins was ill, and I suppose I bored Egg to death by talking all the evening about the time when you and I were there together. Naples (a place always painful to me, in the intense degradation of the people) seems to have only three classes of inhabitants left in it—priests, soldiers (standing army one hundred thousand strong), and spies. Of macaroni we ate very considerable quantities everywhere; also, for the benefit of Italy, we took our share of every description of wine. At Naples, I found Layard, the Nineveh traveller, who is a friend of mine and an admirable fellow; so we fraternised and went up Vesuvius together, and ate more macaroni and drank more wine. At Rome, the day after our arrival, they were making a saint at St. Peter's; on which occasion I was surprised to find what an immense number of pounds of wax candles it takes to make the regular, genuine article. From Turin to Paris, over the Mont Cenis, we made only one journey. The Rhone, being frozen and foggy, was not to be navigated, so we posted from Lyons to Châlons, and everybody else was doing the like,

and there were no horses to be got, and we were stranded at midnight in amazing little cabarets,with nothing worth mentioning to eat in them, except the iron stove, which was rusty, and the billiard-table, which was musty. We left Turin on a Tuesday evening, and arrived in Paris on a Friday evening; where I found my son Charley, hot—or I should rather say cold—from Germany, with his arms and legs so grown out of his coat and trousers, that I was ashamed of him, and was reduced to the necessity of taking him, under cover of night, to a ready-made establishment in the Palais Royal, where they put him into balloon-waisted pantaloons, and increased my confusion. Leaving Calais on the evening of Sunday, the Tenth of December; fact of distinguished author's being aboard, was telegraphed to Dover; thereupon authorities of Dover Railway detained train to London for distinguished author's arrival, rather to the exasperation of British public. D. A. arrived at home between ten and eleven that night, thank God, and found all well and happy.

I think you see the "Times," and if so, you will have seen a very graceful and good account of the Birmingham readings. It was the most remarkable thing that England could produce, I think, in the way of a vast intelligent assemblage; and the success was most wonderful and prodigious—perfectly overwhelming and astounding altogether. They wound up by giving my wife a piece of plate, having given me one before; and when you come to dine here (may it be soon!) it shall be duly displayed in the centre of the table.

Tell Mrs. Cerjat, to whom my love, and all our loves, that I have highly excited them at home here by giving them an account in detail of all your daughters; further, that the way in which Catherine and Georgina have questioned me and cross-questioned me about you all, notwithstanding, is maddening. Mrs. Watson has been obliged to pass her Christmas at Brighton alone with her younger children, in consequence of her two eldest boys coming home to Rockingham from school with the whooping-cough. The quarantine expires to-day, however; and she drives here, on her way back into Northamptonshire, to-morrow.

The sad affair of the Preston strike remains unsettled; and I hear, on strong authority, that if that were settled,

the Manchester people are prepared to strike next. Provisions very dear, but the people very temperate and quiet in general. So ends this jumble, which looks like the index to a chapter in a book, I find, when I read it over. —Ever, my dear Cerjat, Heartily your Friend.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Villa du Camp de Droite, Boulogne,
Wednesday Night, Twelfth July, 1854.

My dear Collins—Bobbing up, corkwise, from a sea of "Hard Times," I beg to report this tenement—amazing!!! Range of view and air, most free and delightful; hill-side garden, delicious; field, stupendous; speculations in haycocks already effected by the undersigned, with the view to the keeping up of a "home" at rounders.

I hope to finish and get to town by next Wednesday night, the nineteenth; what do you say to coming back with me on the following Tuesday? The interval I propose to pass in a career of amiable dissipation and unbounded license in the metropolis. If you will come and breakfast with me about midnight—anywhere—any day, and go to bed no more until we fly to these pastoral retreats, I shall be delighted to have so vicious an associate.

Will you undertake to let Ward know that if he still wishes me to sit to him, he shall have me as long as he likes, at Tavistock House, on Monday, the 24th, from ten a.m.?

I have made it understood here that we shall want to be taken the greatest care of this summer, and to be fed on nourishing meats. Several new dishes have been rehearsed and have come out very well. I have met with what they call in the City "a parcel" of the celebrated 1846 champagne. It is a very fine wine, and calculated to do us good when weak.

The camp is about a mile off. Voluptuous English authors reposing from their literary fatigues (on their laurels) are expected, when all other things fail, to lie on straw in the midst of it when the days are sunny, and stare at the blue sea until they fall asleep. (About one hundred and fifty soldiers have been at various times billeted on Beaucourt since we have been here, and he

has clinked glasses with them every one, and read a MS. book of his father's, on soldiers in general, to them all.)

I shall be glad to hear what you say to these various proposals. I write with the Emperor in the town, and a great expenditure of tricolour floating thereabouts, but no stir makes its way to this inaccessible retreat. It is like being up in a balloon. Lionising Englishmen and Germans start to call, and are found lying imbecile in the road half-way up. Ha! ha! ha! Ever faithfully.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Boulogne, *Tuesday, Twenty-sixth September*, 1854.

My dear Collins—First, I have to report that I received your letter with much pleasure.

Secondly, that the weather has entirely changed. It is so cool that we have not only a fire in the drawing-room regularly, but another to dine by. The delicious freshness of the air is charming, and it is generally bright and windy besides.

Thirdly, that V——'s intellectual faculties appear to have developed suddenly. He has taken to borrowing money; from which I infer (as he had no intention whatever of repaying) that his mental powers are of a high order. Having got a franc from me, he fell upon Mrs. Dickens for five sous. She declining to enter into the transaction, he beleaguered that feeble little couple, Harry and Sydney, into paying two sous each for "tickets" to behold the ravishing spectacle of an utterly-non-existent-and-therefore-impossible-to-be-produced toy theatre. He eats stony apples, and harbours designs upon his fellow-creatures until he has become light-headed. From the couch rendered uneasy by this disorder he has arisen with an excessively protuberant forehead, a dull slow eye, a complexion of a leaden hue, and a croaky voice. He has become a horror to me, and I resort to the most cowardly expedients to avoid meeting him. He, on the other hand, wanting another franc, dodges me round those trees at the corner, and at the back door; and I have a presentiment upon me that I shall fall a sacrifice to his cupidity at last.

On the Sunday night after you left, or rather on the

Monday morning at half-past one, Mary was taken *very ill*. English cholera. She was sinking so fast, and the sickness was so exceedingly alarming, that it evidently would not do to wait for Elliotson.* I caused everything to be done that we had naturally often thought of, in a lonely house so full of children, and fell back upon the old remedy; though the difficulty of giving even it was rendered very great by the frightful sickness. Thank God, she recovered so favourably that by breakfast time she was fast asleep. She slept twenty-four hours, and has never had the least uneasiness since. I heard—of course afterwards—that she had had an attack of sickness two nights before. I think that long ride and those late dinners had been too much for her. Without them I am inclined to doubt whether she would have been ill.

Last Sunday as ever was, the theatre took fire at half-past eleven in the forenoon. Being close by the English Church, it showered hot sparks into that temple through the open windows. Whereupon the congregation shrieked and rose and tumbled out into the street; —— benignly observing to the only ancient female who would listen to him, "I fear we must part"; and afterwards being beheld in the street—in his robes and with a kind of sacred wildness on him—handing ladies over the kennel into shops and other structures, where they had no business whatever, or the least desire to go. I got to the back of the theatre, where I could see in through some great doors that had been forced open, and whence the spectacle of the whole interior, burning like a red-hot cavern, was really very fine, even in the daylight. Meantime the soldiers were at work, "saving" the scenery by pitching it into the next street; and the poor little properties (one spinning-wheel, a feeble imitation of a water-wheel, and a basketful of the dismalest artificial flowers very conspicuous) were being passed from hand to hand with the greatest excitement, as if they were rescued children or lovely women. In four or five hours the whole place was burnt down, except the outer walls. Never in my days did I behold such feeble endeavours in the way of extinguishment. On an average I should say it took ten

* Dr. Elliotson happened, fortunately, to be staying at Boulogne at this time.—Ed.

minutes to throw half a gallon of water on the great roaring heap; and every time it was insulted in this way it gave a ferocious burst, and everybody ran off. Beaucourt has been going about for two days in a clean collar; which phenomenon evidently means something, but I don't know what. Elliotson reports that the great conjurer lives at his hotel, has extra wine every day, and fares expensively. Is he the devil?

I have heard from the Kernel.* Wa'al, sir, sayin' as he minded to locate himself with us for a week. I expected to have heard from him again this morning, but have not.

The Plornish-Maroon desires his duty. He had a fall yesterday, through overbalancing himself in kicking his nurse.

Ever faithfully.

To Frank Stone, A.R.A.

Boulogne, *Friday, Thirteenth October*, 1854.

My dear Stone—Having some little matters that rather press on my attention to see to in town, I have made up my mind to relinquish the walking project, and come straight home (by way of Folkestone) on Tuesday. I shall be due in town at midnight, and shall hope to see you next day, with the top of your coat-collar mended.

Everything that happens here we suppose to be an announcement of the taking of Sebastopol. When a church-clock strikes, we think it is the joy-bell, and fly out of the house in a burst of nationality—to sneak in again. If they practise firing at the camp, we are sure it is the artillery celebrating the fall of the Russian, and we become enthusiastic in a moment. I live in constant readiness to illuminate the whole house. Whatever anybody says I believe; everybody says, every day, that Sebastopol is in flames. Sometimes the Commander-in-Chief has blown himself up, with seventy-five thousand men. Sometimes he has "cut" his way through Lord Raglan, and has fallen back on the advancing body of the Russians, one hundred and forty-two thousand strong, whom he is going to "bring up" (I don't know where from, or how, or when, or why) for the destruction of the Allies. All these things, in the words of the catechism, "I stead-

* Mr. Egg.—Ed.

fastly believe," until I become a mere driveller, a moon-struck, babbling, staring, credulous, imbecile, greedy, gaping, wooden-headed, addle-brained, wool-gathering, dreary, vacant, obstinate civilian.

Ever, my fellow-countryman, affectionately.

To the Hon. Mrs. Watson.

Tavistock House, *Wednesday, First November*, 1854.

My dear Mrs. Watson—The "Walk" is not my writing. It is very well done by a close imitator. Why I found myself so "used up" after "Hard Times" I scarcely know, perhaps because I intended to do nothing in that way for a year, when the idea laid hold of me by the throat in a very violent manner, and because the compression and close condensation necessary for that disjointed form of publication gave me perpetual trouble. But I really was tired, which is a result so very incomprehensible that I can't forget it. I have passed an idle autumn in a beautiful situation, and am dreadfully brown and big.

If you carry out that bright Croydon idea, rely on our glad co-operation, only let me know all about it a few days beforehand; and if you feel equal to the contemplation of the moustache (which has been cut lately) it will give us the heartiest pleasure to come and meet you. This in spite of the terrific duffery of the Crystal Palace. It is a very remarkable thing in itself; but to have so very large a building continually crammed down one's throat, and to find it a new page in "The Whole Duty of Man" to go there, is a little more than even I (and you know how amiable I am) can endure.

You always like to know what I am going to do, so I beg to announce that on the nineteenth of December I am going to read the "Carol" at Reading, where I undertook the presidency of the Literary Institution on the death of poor dear Talfourd. Then I am going on to Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, to do the like for another institution, which is one of the few remaining pleasures of Macready's life. Then I am coming home for Christmas Day. Then I believe I must go to Bradford, in Yorkshire, to read once more to a little fireside party of four

thousand. Then I am coming home again to get up a new little version of "The Children in the Wood" (yet to be written, by the bye), for the children to act on Charley's birthday.

I am full of mixed feeling about the war*—admiration of our valiant men, burning desires to cut the Emperor of Russia's throat, and something like despair to see how the old cannon-smoke and blood-mists obscure the wrongs and sufferings of the people at home. When I consider the Patriotic Fund on the one hand, and on the other the poverty and wretchedness engendered by cholera, of which in London alone, an infinitely larger number of English people than are likely to be slain in the whole Russian war have miserably and needlessly died—I feel as if the world had been pushed back five hundred years. If you are reading new books just now I think you will be interested with a controversy between Whewell and Brewster, on the question of the shining orbs about us being inhabited or no. Whewell's book is called, "On the Plurality of Worlds"; Brewster's, "More Worlds than One." I shouldn't wonder if you know all about them. They bring together a vast number of points of great interest in natural philosophy, and some very curious reasoning on both sides, and leave the matter pretty much where it was.

We had a fine absurdity in connection with our luggage, when we left Boulogne. The barometer had within a few hours fallen about a foot, in honour of the occasion, and it was a tremendous night, blowing a gale of wind and raining a little deluge. The luggage (pretty heavy as you may suppose), in a cart drawn by two horses, stuck fast in a rut in our field, and couldn't be moved. Our man, made a lunatic by the extremity of the occasion, ran down to the town to get two more horses to help it out, when he returned with those horses and carter B, the most beaming of men; carter A, who had been soaking all the time by the disabled vehicle, descried in carter B the acknowledged enemy of his existence, took his own two horses out, and walked off with them! After which, the whole set-out remained in the field all night, and we came to town, thirteen individuals, with one comb and

* The Crimean War.—Ed.

a pocket-handkerchief. I was upside-down during the greater part of the passage.

Dr. Rae's account of Franklin's unfortunate party * is deeply interesting; but I think hasty in its acceptance of the details, particularly in the statement that they had eaten the dead bodies of their companions, which I don't believe. Franklin, on a former occasion, was almost starved to death, had gone through all the pains of that sad end, and lain down to die, and no such thought had presented itself to any of them. In famous cases of shipwreck, it is very rare indeed that any person of any humanising education or refinement resorts to this dreadful means of prolonging life. In open boats, the coarsest and commonest men of the shipwrecked party have done such things; but I don't remember more than one instance in which an officer had overcome the loathing that the idea had inspired. Dr. Rae talks about their *cooking* these remains too. I should like to know where the fuel came from.—Ever, my dear Mrs. Watson,

Affectionately yours.

To Miss Procter.

Tavistock House, *Sunday, Seventeenth December*, 1854.

My dear Miss Procter—You have given me a new sensation. I did suppose that nothing in this singular world could surprise me, but you have done it.

You will believe my congratulations on the delicacy and talent of your writing to be sincere. From the first, I have always had an especial interest in that Miss Berwick,† and have over and over again questioned Wills about her. I suppose he has gone on gradually building up an imaginary structure of life and adventure for her, but he has given me the strangest information! Only yesterday week, when we were "making up" "The Poor Travellers," as I sat meditatively poking the office fire, I said to him, "Wills, have you got that Miss Berwick's

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* Sir John Franklin's Arctic expedition, 1845.—Ed.

† Adelaide Anne Procter, daughter of Dickens's friend Bryan Waller Procter ("Barry Cornwall"), had contributed to "Household Words" under the pseudonym of Miss Mary Berwick.—Ed.

proof back, of the little sailor's song?" "No," he said. "Well, but why not?" I asked him. "Why, you know," he answered, "as I have often told you before, she don't live at the place to which her letters are addressed, and so there's always difficulty and delay in communicating with her." "Do you know what age she is?" I said. Here he looked unfathomably profound, and returned, "Rather advanced in life." "You said she was a governess, didn't you?" said I; to which he replied in the most emphatic and positive manner, "A governess."

He then came and stood in the corner of the hearth, with his back to the fire, and delivered himself like an oracle concerning you. He told me that early in life (conveying to me the impression of about a quarter of a century ago) you had had your feelings desperately wounded by some cause, real or imaginary—"It does not matter which," said I, with the greatest sagacity—and that you had then taken to writing verses. That you were of an unhappy temperament, but keenly sensitive to encouragement. That you wrote after the educational duties of the day were discharged. That you sometimes thought of never writing any more. That you had been away for some time "with your pupils." That your letters were of a mild and melancholy character, and that you did not seem to care as much as might be expected about money. All this time I sat poking the fire, with a wisdom upon me absolutely crushing; and finally I begged him to assure the lady that she might trust me with her real address, and that it would be better to have it now, as I hoped our further communications, etc. etc. etc. You must have felt enormouly wicked last Tuesday, when I, such a babe in the wood, was unconsciously prattling to you. But you have given me so much pleasure, and have made me shed so many tears, that I can only think of you now in association with the sentiment and grace of your verses.

So pray accept the blessing and forgiveness of Richard Watts, though I am afraid you come under both his conditions of exclusion.* Very faithfully yours.

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* The inscription on the house in Rochester known as "Watts' Charity" is to the effect that it furnishes a night's lodging for six poor travellers—"not being Rogues or Proctors."—Ed.

To M. de Cerjat.

Tavistock House, *Third January*, 1855.

My dear Cerjat—When your Christmas letter did not arrive according to custom, I felt as if a bit of Christmas had fallen out and there was no supplying the piece. However, it was soon supplied by yourself, and the bowl became round and sound again.

The Christmas number of "Household Words," I suppose, will reach Lausanne about midsummer. The first ten pages or so—all under the head of "The First Poor Traveller"—are written by me, and I hope you will find, in the story of the soldier which they contain, something that may move you a little. It moved me *not* a little in the writing, and I believe has touched a vast number of people. We have sold eighty thousand of it.

I am but newly come home from reading at Reading, and at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, and at Bradford, in Yorkshire. Wonderful audiences! and the number at the last place three thousand seven hundred. And yet but for the noise of their laughing and cheering, they "went" like one man.

The absorption of the English mind in the war is, to me, a melancholy thing. Every other subject of popular solicitude and sympathy goes down before it. I fear I clearly see that for years to come domestic reforms are shaken to the root; every miserable red-tapist flourishes war over the head of every protester against his humbug; and everything connected with it is pushed to such an unreasonable extent, that, however kind and necessary it may be in itself, it becomes ridiculous. For all this is an indubitable fact, I conceive, that Russia must be stopped, and that the future peace of the world renders the war imperative upon us. The Duke of Newcastle lately addressed a private letter to the newspapers, entreating them to exercise a larger discretion in respect of the letters of "Our Own Correspondents," against which Lord Raglan protests as giving the Emperor of Russia information for nothing which would cost him (if indeed he could get it at all) fifty or a hundred thousand pounds a year. The communication has not been attended with much effect, so far as I can see. In the mean-

time I do suppose we have the wretchedest Ministry that ever was—in whom nobody not in office of some sort believes—yet whom there is nobody to displace. The strangest result, perhaps, of years of Reformed Parliaments that ever the general sagacity did *not* forsake.

Let me recommend you, as a brother-reader of high distinction, two comedies, both Goldsmith's—"She Stoops to Conquer," and "The Good-natured Man." Both are so admirable and so delightfully written that they read wonderfully. A friend of mine, Forster, who wrote the "Life of Goldsmith," was very ill a year or so ago, and begged me to read to him one night as he lay in bed, "something of Goldsmith's." I fell upon "She Stoops to Conquer," and we enjoyed it with that wonderful intensity, that I believe he began to get better in the first scene, and was all right again in the fifth act.

I am charmed by your account of Haldimand, to whom my love. Tell him Sydney Smith's daughter has privately printed a life of her father with selections from his letters, which has great merit, and often presents him exactly as he used to be. I have strongly urged her to publish it, and I think she will do so, about March.

My eldest boy has come home from Germany to learn a business life at Birmingham (I think), first of all. The whole nine are well and happy. Ditto, Mrs. Dickens. Ditto, Georgina. My two girls are full of interest in yours; and one of mine (as I think I told you when I was at the Elysée) is curiously like one of yours in the face. They are all agog now about a great fairy play, which is to come off here next Monday. The house is full of spangles, gas, Jew theatrical tailors, and pantomime carpenters. We all unite in kindest and best loves to dear Mrs. Cerjat and all the blooming daughters. And I am, with frequent thoughts of you and cordial affection, ever, my dear Cerjat, Your faithful Friend.

To Arthur Ryland.

Tavistock House, *Monday, Twenty-ninth January*, 1855.

My dear Mr. Ryland—I have been in the greatest difficulty—which I am not yet out of—to know what to read at Birmingham. I fear the idea of next month is now impracticable. Which of two other months do you

think would be preferable for your Birmingham objects? Next May, or next December?

Having already read two Christmas books at Birmingham, I should like to get out of that restriction, and have a swim in the broader waters of one of my long books. I have been poring over "Copperfield" (which is my favourite), with the idea * of getting a reading out of it, to be called by some such name as "Young Housekeeping and Little Emily." But there is still the huge difficulty that I constructed the whole with immense pains, and have so woven it up and blended it together, that I cannot yet so separate the parts as to tell the story of David's married life with Dora, and the story of Mr. Peggotty's search for his niece, within the time. This is my object. If I could possibly bring it to bear, it would make a very attractive reading, with a strong interest in it, and a certain completeness.

This is exactly the state of the case. I don't mind confiding to you, that I never can approach the book with perfect composure (it had such perfect possession of me when I wrote it), and that I no sooner begin to try to get it into this form, than I begin to read it all, and to feel that I cannot disturb it. I have not been unmindful of the agreement we made at parting, and I have sat staring at the backs of my books for an inspiration. This project is the only one that I have constantly reverted to, and yet I have made no progress in it!

Faithfully yours always.

To W. M. Thackeray.

Tavistock House,
Friday Evening, Twenty-third March, 1855.

My dear Thackeray—I have read in the "Times" to-day an account of your last night's lecture, and cannot refrain from assuring you in all truth and earnestness that I am profoundly touched by your generous reference to me. I do not know how to tell you what a glow it spread over my heart. Out of its fulness I do entreat you to believe that I shall never forget your words of commen-

* His first proposal for "Copperfield," one of the most popular of his readings.—Ed.

dation. If you could wholly know at once how you have moved me, and how you have animated me, you would be the happier, I am very certain.

Faithfully yours ever.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Tavistock House, *Saturday, Twenty-fourth March*, 1855.

My dear Collins—I am charmed to hear of the great improvement, and really hope now that you are beginning to see land.

The train (an express one) leaves London Bridge Station on Tuesday at half-past eleven in the forenoon. Fire and comfort are ordered to be in readiness at the Inn at Ashford. We shall have to return at half-past two in the morning—getting to town before five—but the interval between the Reading and the Mails will be spent by what would be called in a popular musical entertainment "the flick o' our ain firesides"—which reminds me to observe that I am dead sick of the Scottish tongue in all its moods and tenses.

You have guessed right! The best of it was that she [Mrs. Gaskell] wrote to Wills, saying she must particularly stipulate not to have her proofs touched, "even by Mr. Dickens." That immortal creature had gone over the proofs ["North and South"] with great pains—had of course taken out the stiflings—hard-plungings, lungeings, and other convulsions—and had also taken out her weakenings and damagings of her own effects. "Very well," said the gifted Man, "she shall have her own way. But after it's published show her this Proof, and ask her to consider whether her story would have been the better or the worse for it."

When you see Millais, tell him that if he would like a quotation for his fireman picture there is a very suitable and appropriate one to be got from Gay's "Trivia." . . .

Ever yours.

I dined with an old General yesterday, who went perfectly mad at dinner about the "Times"—exudations taking place from his mouth while he denied all its statements, that were partly foam, and partly turbot with white sauce. He persisted, likewise, in speaking of that Journal as "Him."

To Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

Tavistock House, *Sunday, Twentieth May*, 1855.

My dear Stanny—I have a little lark in contemplation, if you will help it to fly.

Collins has done a melodrama (a regular old-style melodrama), in which there is a very good notion. I am going to act it, as an experiment, in the children's theatre here—I, Mark, Collins, Egg, and my daughter Mary, the whole *dram. pers.;* our families and yours the whole audience; for I want to make the stage large and shouldn't have room for above five-and-twenty spectators. Now, there is only one scene in the piece, and that, my tarry lad, is the inside of a lighthouse. Will you come and paint it for us one night, and we'll all turn to and help? It is a mere wall, of course, but Mark and I have sworn that you must do it. If you will say yes, I should like to have the tiny flats made, after you have looked at the place, and not before. On Wednesday in this week I am good for a steak and the play, if you will make your own appointment here; or any day next week except Thursday. Write me a line in reply. We mean to burst on an astonished world with the melodrama, without any note of preparation. So don't say a syllable to Forster if you should happen to see him. Ever affectionately yours.

To Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

Tavistock House, *Tuesday Afternoon, Six o'clock, Twenty-second May*, 1855.

My dear Stanny—Your note came while I was out walking. Even if I had been at home I could not have managed to dine together to-day, being under a beastly engagement to dine out. Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I shall expect you here some time to-morrow, and will remain at home. I only wait your instructions to get the little canvases made. O, what a pity it is not the outside of the light'us, with the sea a-rowling agin it! Never mind, we'll get an effect out of the inside, and there's a storm and shipwreck "off"; and the great ambition of my life will be achieved at last, in the wearing of a pair of very coarse petticoat trousers. So hoorar for the salt sea, mate, and bouse up!—Ever affectionately, Dicky.

To Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

Tavistock House, *Wednesday, Twentieth June,* 1855.

My dear Stanny—I write a hasty note to let you know that last night was perfectly wonderful ! ! !

Such an audience! Such a brilliant success from first to last! The Queen had taken it into her head in the morning to go to Chatham, and had carried Phipps with her. He wrote to me asking if it were possible to give him a quarter of an hour. I got through that time before the overture, and he came without any dinner, so influenced by eager curiosity. Lemon and I did every conceivable absurdity, I think, in the farce; and they never left off laughing. At supper I proposed your health, which was drunk with nine times nine, and three cheers over. We then turned to at Scotch reels (having had no exercise), and danced in the maddest way until five this morning.

It is as much as I can do to guide the pen.

Ever most affectionately yours.

To Mrs. Winter

Tavistock House, *Saturday, Thirtieth June,* 1855.

My dear Mrs. Winter—I am truly grieved to hear of your affliction in the loss of your darling baby. But if you be not, even already, so reconciled to the parting from that innocent child for a little while, as to bear it gently and with a softened sorrow, I know that that not unhappy state of mind must soon arise. The death of infants is a release from so much chance and change—from so many casualties and distresses—and is a thing so beautiful in its serenity and peace—that it should not be a bitterness, even in a mother's heart. The simplest and most affecting passage in all the noble history of our Great Master, is His consideration for little children; and in reference to yours, as many millions of bereaved mothers poor and rich will do in reference to theirs until the end of time, you may take the comfort of the generous words, "And He took a child and set it in the midst of them."

In a book, by one of the greatest English writers,*

* Henry Fielding.—Ed.

called "A Journey from this World to the Next," a parent comes to the distant country beyond the grave, and finds the little girl he had lost so long ago, engaged in building a bower to receive him in, when his aged steps should bring him there at last. He is filled with joy to see her, so young—so bright—so full of promise—and is enraptured to think that she never was old, wan, tearful, withered. This is always one of the sources of consolation in the deaths of children. With no effort of the fancy, with nothing to undo, you will always be able to think of the pretty creature you have lost, *as a child* in heaven.

A poor little baby of mine lies in Highgate cemetery —and I laid her just as you think of laying yours, in the catacombs there, until I made a resting-place for all of us in the free air.

It is better that I should not come to see you. I feel quite sure of that, and will think of you instead.

God bless and comfort you! Mrs. Dickens and her sister send their kindest condolences to yourself and Mr. Winter. I add mine with all my heart.

Affectionately your Friend.

To W. H. Wills.

49 Avenue des Champs Elysées, Paris,
Sunday Night, Twenty-first October, 1855.

My dear Wills—I will try my hand at that paper for "H. W." to-morrow if I can get a yard of flooring to sit upon; but we have really been in that state of topsy-turvyhood that even that has been an unattainable luxury, and may yet be for eight-and-forty hours or so, for anything I see to the contrary.

I have two floors here—*entresol* and first—in a doll's house, but really pretty within, and the view without, astounding, as you will say when you come. The house is on the Exposition side, about half a quarter of a mile above Franconi's, of course on the other side of the way, and close to the Jardin d'Hîver. We have no fewer than six rooms (besides the back ones) looking on the Champs Elysées, with the wonderful life perpetually flowing up and down. We have no spare-room, but excellent stowage for the whole family, including a capital dressing-room for me, and a really slap-up kitchen near the stairs.

But, sir—but—when Georgina, the servants, and I were here for the first night (Catherine and the rest being at Boulogne), I heard Georgy restless—turned out—asked: "What's the matter?" "Oh, it's dreadfully dirty. I can't sleep for the smell of my room"—imagine all my stage-managerial energies multiplied at daybreak by a thousand. Imagine the porter, the porter's wife, the porter's wife's sister, a feeble upholsterer of enormous age from round the corner, and all his workmen (four boys), summoned. Imagine the partners in the proprietorship of the apartment, the martial little man with François-Prussian beard, also summoned. Imagine your inimitable chief briefly explaining that dirt is not in his way, and that he is driven to madness, and that he devotes himself to no coat and a dirty face, until the apartment is thoroughly purified. Imagine co-proprietors at first astounded, then urging that "it's not the custom," then wavering, then affected, then confiding their utmost private sorrows to the Inimitable, offering new carpets (accepted), embraces (not accepted), and really responding like French bricks. Sallow, unbrushed, unshorn, awful, stalks the Inimitable through the apartment until last night. Then all the improvements were concluded, and you must picture it as the smallest place you ever saw, but as exquisitely cheerful and vivacious, clean as anything human can be, and with a moving panorama always outside, which is Paris in itself.

I thought we were to give £1700 for the house at Gad's Hill.* Are we bound to £1800? Considering the improvements to be made, it is a little too much, isn't it? I have a strong impression that at the utmost we were only to divide the difference, and not to pass £1750. You will set me right if I am wrong. But I don't think I am. Ever, my dear Wills, faithfully.

To W. H. Wills.

Avenue des Champs Elysées,
Wednesday, Twenty-fourth October, 1855.

My dear Wills—In the Gad's Hill matter, I too would like to try the effect of "not budging." *So do not go be-*

* This is Dickens's way of writing this name, instead of the more usual form, *Gadshill*.—Ed.

yond the £1700. Considering what I should have to expend on the one hand, and the low price of stock on the other, I do not feel disposed to go beyond that mark. They won't let a purchaser escape for the sake of the £100, I think. And Austin was strongly of opinion, when I saw him last, that £1700 was enough.

You cannot think how pleasant it is to me to find myself generally known and liked here. If I go into a shop to buy anything, and give my card, the officiating priest or priestess brightens up, and says: "*Ah! c'est l'écrivain célèbre! Monsieur porte un nom trés-distingué. Mais! je suis honoré et interessé de voir Monsieur Dick-in. Je lis un des livres de monsieur tous les jours*" (in the "Moniteur"). And a man who brought some little vases home last night, said: "*On connaît bien en France que Monsieur Dick-in prend sa position sur la dignité de la littérature. Ah! c'est grande chose! Et ses caractères*" (this was to Georgina, while he unpacked) "*sont si spirituellement tournées! Cette Madame Tojare*" (Todgers), "*ah! qu'elle est drôle et précisément comme une dame que je connais à Calais.*" Ever faithfully.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Paris, 49 Avenue des Champs Elysées,
Wednesday, Twelfth December, 1855.

My dear Collins—. . . I leave here for town on Saturday, but shall have to start for Peterborough on Monday morning. If you are free on Wednesday (when I shall return from that reading), and will meet me at the "Household Words" office at half-past five, I shall be happy to start on any Haroun Alraschid expedition.

Think of my going down to Sheffield on Friday, to read there—in the bitter winter—with journey back to Paris before me!

I thought your Christmas story ["The Ostler"] *immensely improved* in the working out. The botheration of that Number has been prodigious. The general matter was so disappointing, and so impossible to be fitted together or got into the frame, that after I had done the Guest and the Bill, and thought myself free for a little Dorrit again, I had to go back once more (feeling the thing too weak) and do the Boots. Look at said Boots;

because I think it's an odd idea, and gets something of the effect of a Fairy Story out of the most unlikely materials. . . .

Every Frenchman who can write a begging letter writes one, and leaves it for this apartment. He first of all buys any literary composition printed in quarto on tea paper with a limp cover, scrawls upon it "*Hommage à Charles Dickens, l'illustre Romancier*"—encloses the whole in a dirty envelope, reeking with tobacco-smoke—and prowls, assassin-like, for days, in a big cloak and an enormous *cachenez* like a counterpane, about the scraper of the outer door. Ever faithfully.

To Mark Lemon.

49 Champs Elysées, Paris,
Monday, Seventh January, 1856.

My dear Mark—In a piece at the Ambigu, called the "Rentrée à Paris," a mere scene in honour of the return of the troops from the Crimea the other day, there is a novelty which I think it worth letting you know of, as it is easily available, either for a serious or a comic interest—the introduction of a supposed electric telegraph. This scene is the railway terminus at Paris, with the electric telegraph office on the prompt side, and the clerks *with their backs to the audience*—much more real than if they were, as they infallibly would be, staring about the house—working the needles; and the little bell perpetually ringing. There are assembled to greet the soldiers, all the easily and naturally imagined elements of interest—old veteran fathers, young children, agonised mothers sisters and brothers, girl lovers—each impatient to know of his or her own object of solicitude. Enter to these a certain marquis, full of sympathy for all, who says: "My friends, I am one of you. My brother has no commission yet. He is a common soldier. I wait for him as well as all brothers and sisters here wait for *their* brothers. Tell me whom you are expecting." Then they all tell him. Then he goes into the telegraph-office, and sends a message down the line to know how long the troops will be. Bell rings. Answer handed out on a slip of paper. "Delay on the line. Troops will not arrive for a quarter of an hour." General disappointment. "But we have this

brave electric telegraph, my friends," says the marquis. "Give me your little messages, and I'll send them off." General rush round the marquis. Exclamations: "How's Henri?" "My love to Georges"; "Has Guillaume forgotten Elise?" "Is my son wounded?" "Is my brother promoted?" etc. etc. Marquis composes tumult. Sends message—such a regiment, such a company—"Elise's love to Georges." Little bell rings, slip of paper handed out—"Georges in ten minutes will embrace his Elise. Sends her a thousand kisses." Marquis sends message—such a regiment, such a company—"Is my son wounded?" Little bell rings. Slip of paper handed out—"No. He has not yet upon him those marks of bravery in the glorious service of his country which his dear old father bears" (father being lamed and invalided). Last of all the widowed mother. Marquis sends message—such a regiment, such a company—"Is my only son safe?" Little bell rings. Slip of paper handed out—"He was first upon the heights of Alma." General cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was made a sergeant at Inkermann." Another cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was made colour-sergeant at Sebastopol." Another cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was the first man who leaped with the French banner on the Malakhoff tower." Tremendous cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "But he was struck down there by a musket-ball, and ——. Troops have proceeded. Will arrive in half a minute after this." Mother abandons all hope; general commiseration; troops rush in, down a platform; son only wounded, and embraces her.

As I have said, and as you will see, this is available for any purpose. But done with equal distinction and rapidity, it is a tremendous effect, and got by the simplest means in the world. There is nothing in the piece, but it was impossible not to be moved and excited by the telegraph part of it.

I have written to Beaucourt about taking that breezy house—a little improved—for the summer, and I hope you and yours will come there often and stay there long. My present idea, if nothing should arise to uproot me sooner, is to stay here until the middle of May, then plant

the family at Boulogne, and come with Catherine and Georgy home for two or three weeks.

We are up to our knees in mud here. Literally in vehement despair, I walked down the avenue outside the Barrière de l'Etoile here yesterday, and went straight on among the trees. I came back with top-boots of mud on. Nothing will cleanse the streets. Numbers of men and women are for ever scooping and sweeping in them, and they are always one lake of yellow mud. All my trousers go to the tailor's every day, and are ravelled out at the heels every night. Washing is awful.

Tell Mrs. Lemon, with my love, that I have bought her some Eau d'Or, in grateful remembrance of her knowing what it is, and crushing the tyrant of her existence by resolutely refusing to be put down when that monster would have silenced her. You may imagine the loves and messages that are now being poured in upon me by all of them, so I will give none of them; though I am pretending to be very scrupulous about it, and am looking (I have no doubt) as if I were writing them down with the greatest care. Ever affectionately.

To Miss Hogarth.

"Household Words," *Friday, Fourteenth March*, 1856.

My dear Georgy—I am amazed to hear of the snow (I don't know why, but it excited John this morning beyond measure); though we have had the same east wind here, and *the* cold and *my* cold have both been intense.

Yesterday evening Webster, Mark, Stanny, and I went to the Olympic, where the Wigans ranged us in a row in a gorgeous and immense private box, and where we saw "Still Waters Run Deep." I laughed (in a conspicuous manner) to that extent at Emery, when he received the dinner-company, that the people were more amused by me than by the piece. I don't think I ever saw anything meant to be funny that struck me as so extraordinarily droll. I couldn't get over it at all. After the piece we went round, by Wigan's invitation, to drink with him. It being positively impossible to get Stanny off the stage, we stood in the wings during the burlesque. Mrs. Wigan seemed really glad to see her old manager,

and the company overwhelmed him with embraces. They had nearly all been at the meeting in the morning.

This day I have paid the purchase-money for Gad's Hill Place. After drawing the cheque, I turned round to give it to Wills (£1790), and said: "Now isn't it an extraordinary thing—look at the day—Friday! * I have been nearly drawing it half a dozen times, when the lawyers have not been ready, and here it comes round upon a Friday, as a matter of course."

Kiss the noble Plorn a dozen times for me, and tell him I drank his health yesterday, and wished him many happy returns of the day; also that I hope he will not have broken all his toys before I come back.

Ever affectionately.

To W. C. Macready.

49 Champs Elysées, Paris,
Saturday, Twenty-second March, 1856.

My dear Macready,—I want you—you being quite well again, as I trust you are, and resolute to come to Paris—so to arrange your order of march as to let me know beforehand when you will come and how long you will stay. We owe Scribe and his wife a dinner, and I should like to pay the debt when you are with us. Ary Scheffer too would be delighted to see you again. If I could arrange for a certain day I would secure them. We cannot afford (you and I, I mean) to keep much company, because we shall have to look in at a theatre or so, I dare say!

It would suit my work best, if I could keep myself clear until Monday, the Seventh of April. But in case that day should be too late for the beginning of your brief visit with a deference to any other engagements you have in contemplation, then fix an earlier one, and I will make "Little Dorrit" curtsy to it. My recent visit to London and my having only just now come back have thrown me a little behindhand: but I hope to come up with a wet sail in a few days.

You should have seen the ruins of Covent Garden

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* Dickens's "lucky day."—Ed.

Theatre! * I went in the moment I got to London—four days after the fire. Although the audience part and the stage were so tremendously burnt out that there was not a piece of wood half the size of a lucifer-match for the eye to rest on, though nothing whatever remained but bricks and smelted iron lying on a great black desert, the theatre still looked so wonderfully like its old self grown gigantic that I never saw so strange a sight. The wall dividing the front from the stage still remained, and the iron pass-doors stood ajar in an impossible and inaccessible frame. The arches that supported the stage were there, and the arches that supported the pit; and in the centre of the latter lay something like a Titanic grape-vine that a hurricane had pulled up by the roots, twisted, and flung down there; this was the great chandelier. Gye had kept the men's wardrobe at the top of the house over the great entrance staircase; when the roof fell in it came down bodily, and all that part of the ruins was like an old Babylonic pavement, bright rays tesselating the black ground, sometimes in pieces so large that I could make out the clothes in the "Trovatore."

I should run on for a couple of hours if I had to describe the spectacle as I saw it, wherefore I will immediately muzzle myself. All Parisian novelties you shall see and hear for yourself.—Ever, my dearest Macready,

Your affectionate Friend.

PS.—Mr. F.'s aunt sends her defiant respects.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Champs Elysées, *Sunday, April Thirteenth,* 1856.

My dear Collins—We checked you off at the various points of your journey all day, but never dreamed of the half gale. You must have had an abominable passage with that convivial club. My soul sickens at the thought of it; and the smell seizes hold of the bridge of my nose exactly halfway up, and won't let it go again.

Your portress duly appeared with the small account and your note. I paid her immediately, of course, and she departed rejoicing. The Pavilion looks very desolate,

* Burnt down fourth of March, 1856.—Ed.

and nobody has taken it as yet. Macready left us at seven yesterday morning, and I afterwards took a long country walk to get into train for work. It was a noble spring day, and the air most delightful. But I found the evening sufficiently dull, and indeed we all miss you very much. . . .

Macready went on Friday to the Rehearsal of "Comme il vous plaira" ["As You Like It"], which was produced last night. His account of it was absolutely stunning. The speech of the Seven Ages delivered as a light comedy joke; Jacques at the Court of the Reigning Duke instead of the banished one, and winding up the thing by *marrying Celia!* Everything as wide of Shakespeare as possible, and confirming my previous impression that she just knew nothing at all about it. She was to have been here on Friday evening, but had "la migraine" (of which I think you have heard before); but Régnier said, as to the piece, "La pièce. Il n'y a point de pièce," tapped his forehead with great violence, and threw whatever liquid came out into the air, as an offering to the offended gods. Girardin said. "Qu'il l'avait trouvé à la répetition très intéressante, très intéressante, très intéressante!"— and said nothing more the whole evening. I dine at another of his prodigious banquets to-morrow.

I am very anxious to know what your Doctor says. If he should fail to set you up by the 3rd or 4th of May, for me, I shall consider him a humbug. It occurs to me to mention that if you don't get settled in May, the Hogarths will then leave Tavistock House to me and Charley, and you know how easily and amply it can accommodate you. Pray don't forget that it is available for your quarters. There will be two or three large airy bedrooms with nobody to occupy them, and the range of the whole sheeted house besides. The Pavilion of the Moulineaux I shall, of course, reserve for your summer occupation and work. Talking of which latter, I am reminded to say that the Scotch Housekeeper is secured.

You know exactly where I am sitting, what I am seeing, what I am hearing, what is going on around me in every way. I have not a scrap of news, except that Poole, at the Français, complained bitterly to Macready of your humble servant's neglect, which, considering that he would unquestionably be in some remote English

workhouse but for me, I think characteristic. Macready's reply to him appears to have been: "Er—really—er—no Poole; —er—must excuse me—host—um—friend—er—great affection—um—cannot permit—er—must therefore distinctly beg . . ."

All unite in kindest regard and best wishes for your speedily coming all right again. Ever faithfully.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Champs Elysées, *Tuesday, Twenty-second April*, 1856.

My dear Collins—I have been quite taken aback by your account of your alarming seizure; and have only become reassured again, firstly by the good fortune of your having left here and got so near your doctor; secondly, by your hopefulness of now making head in the right direction. On the 3rd or 4th I purpose being in town, and I need not say that I shall forthwith come to look after my old Patient.

On Sunday, to my infinite amazement, Townshend appeared. He has changed his plans, and is staying in Paris a week, before going to Town for a couple of months. He dined here on Sunday, and placidly ate and drank in the most vigorous manner, and mildly laid out a terrific perspective of projects for carrying me off to the Theatre every night. But in the morning he found himself with dawnings of Bronchitis, and is now luxuriously laid up in lavender at his Hotel—confining himself entirely to precious stones, chicken, and fragrant wines qualified with iced waters.

Last Friday I took Mrs. Dickens, Georgina, and Mary and Katey, to dine at the Trois Frères. We then, sir, went off to the Français, to see "Comme il vous plaira" —which is a kind of Theatrical Representation that I think might be got up, with great completeness, by the Patients in the asylum for Idiots. Dreariness is no word for it, vacancy is no word for it, gammon is no word for it, there *is* no word for it. Nobody has anything to do but to sit upon as many grey stones as he can. When Jacques had sat upon seventy-seven stones and forty-two roots of trees (which was at the end of the second act), we came away. He had by that time been made violent love to by Celia, had shown himself in every phase

of his existence to be utterly unknown to Shakespeare, had made the speech about the Seven Ages out of its right place, and apropos of nothing on earth, and had in all respects conducted himself like a brutalised, benighted, and besotted Beast.

A wonderful dinner at Girardin's last Monday, with only one new (but appropriate) feature in it. When we went into the drawing-room after the banquet, which had terminated in a flower-pot out of a ballet being set before every guest, piled to the brim with the ruddiest fresh strawberries, he asked me if I would come into another room (a chamber of no account—rather like the last Scene in "Gustavus") and smoke a cigar. On my replying yes, he opened, with a key attached to his watch-chain, a species of mahogany cave, which appeared to me to extend under the Champs Elysées, and in which were piled about four hundred thousand inestimable and unattainable cigars, in bundles or bales of about a thousand each.

Yesterday I dined at the bookseller's with the body of Translators engaged on my new Edition—one of them a lady, young and pretty. (I hope, by the bye, judging from the questions which they asked me, and which I asked them, that it will be really well done.) Among them was an extremely amiable old Savant, who occasionally expressed himself in a foreign tongue which I supposed to be Russian (I thought he had something to do with the congress perhaps), but which my host told me, when I came away, was English! We wallowed in an odd sort of dinner, which would have been splashy if it hadn't been too sticky. Salmon appeared late in the evening, and unforeseen creatures of the lobster species strayed in after the pudding. It was very hospitable and good-natured though, and we all got on in the friendliest way. Please to imagine me for three mortal hours incessantly holding forth to the translators, and, among other things, addressing them in a neat and appropriate (French) speech. I came home quite light-headed.

On Saturday night I paid three francs at the door of that place where we saw the wrestling, and went in, at eleven o'clock, to a Ball. Much the same as our own National Argyle Rooms. Some pretty faces, but all of two classes—wicked and coldly calculating, or haggard and wretched in their worn beauty. Among the latter

was a woman of thirty or so, in an Indian shawl, who never stirred from a seat in a corner all the time I was there. Handsome, regardless, brooding, and yet with some nobler qualities in her forehead. I mean to walk about to-night and look for her. I didn't speak to her there, but I have a fancy that I should like to know more about her. Never shall, I suppose.

Franconi's I have been to again, of course. Nowhere else. I finished "that" No. as soon as Macready went away, and have done something for "Household Words" next week, called "Proposals for a National Jest-Book," that I take rather kindly to. The first blank page of "Little Dorrit," No. 8, now eyes me on this desk with a pressing curiosity. It will get nothing out of me to-day, I distinctly perceive.

That swearing of the Academy Carpenters is the best thing of its kind I ever heard of. I suppose the oath to be administered by little Knight. It's my belief that the stout Porter, now no more, wouldn't have taken it. Our cook's going. Says she "ain't strong enough for BooLone." I don't know what there is particularly trying in that climate. The nice little Nurse who goes into all manner of shops without knowing one word of French, took some lace to be mended the other day, and the Shopkeeper, impressed with the idea that she had come to sell it, *would* give her money; with which she returned weeping, believing it (until explanation ensued) to be the price of shame.

All send kindest regard. Ever faithfully.

To Miss Hogarth.

Tavistock House, *Monday, Fifth May*, 1856.

My dear Georgy—You will not be much surprised to hear that I have done nothing yet—(except for "H. W."), and have only just settled down into a corner of the schoolroom. The extent to which John and I wallowed in dust for four hours yesterday morning, getting things neat and comfortable about us, you may faintly imagine. At four in the afternoon came Stanfield, to whom I no sooner described the notion of the new play, than he immediately upset all my new arrangements by making a proscenium

of the chairs, and planning the scenery with walking-sticks. One of the least things he did was getting on the top of the long table, and hanging over the bar in the middle window where that top sash opens, as if he had got a hinge in the middle of his body. He is immensely excited on the subject. Mark has a farce ready for the managerial perusal, but it won't do.

I went to Dover theatre on Friday night, which was a miserable spectacle. The pit is boarded over, and it is a drinking and smoking place. It was "for the benefit of Mrs. ——," and the town had been very extensively placarded with "Don't forget Friday." I made out four and ninepence (I am serious) in the house, when I went in. We may have warmed up in the course of the evening to twelve shillings. A Jew played the grand piano; Mrs. —— sang no end of songs (with not a bad voice, poor creature); Mr. —— sang comic songs fearfully, and danced clog hornpipes capitally; and a miserable woman, shivering in a shawl and bonnet, sat in the side-boxes all the evening nursing Master ——, aged seven months. It was a most forlorn business, and I should have contributed a sovereign to the treasury if I had known how.

I walked to Deal and back that day, and on the previous day walked over the downs towards Canterbury in a gale of wind. It was better than still weather after all, being wonderfully fresh and free.

If the Plorn were sitting at this schoolroom window in the corner, he would see more cats in an hour than he ever saw in his life. *I* never saw so many, I think, as I have seen since yesterday morning.

There is a painful picture of a great deal of merit (Egg has bought it) in the exhibition, painted by the man who did those little interiors of Forster's. It is called "The Death of Chatterton." The dead figure is a good deal like Arthur Stone; and I was touched on Saturday to see that tender old file standing before it, crying under his spectacles at the idea of seeing his son dead. It was a very tender manifestation of his gentle old heart.

This sums up my news, which is no news at all. Kiss the Plorn for me, and expound to him that I am always looking forward to meeting him again, among the birds and flowers in the garden on the side of the hill at Boulogne.

Ever affectionately.

To T. Ross and Mr. J. Kenny.

Tavistock House, *Monday, Nineteenth May*, 1856.

Gentlemen—I have received a letter signed by you (which I assume to be written mainly on behalf of what are called Working-men and their families) inviting me to attend a meeting in our Parish Vestry Hall this evening on the subject of the stoppage of the Sunday bands in the Parks.

I thoroughly agree with you that those bands have afforded an innocent and healthful enjoyment on the Sunday afternoon, to which the people have a right. But I think it essential that the working people should, of themselves, and by themselves assert that right. They have been informed, on the high authority of their first Minister (lately rather in want of House of Commons votes, I am told), that they are almost indifferent to it. The correction of that mistake, if official omniscience can be mistaken, lies with themselves. In case it should be considered by the meeting, which I prefer for this reason not to attend, expedient to unite with other Metropolitan parishes in forming a fund for the payment of such expenses as may be incurred in peaceably and numerously representing to the governing powers that the harmless recreation they have taken away is very much wanted, I beg you to put down my name as a subscriber of ten pounds.—And I am, Your faithful Servant.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Tavistock House, *Sixth June*, 1856.

My dear Collins—I have never seen anything about myself in print which has much correctness in it—any biographical account of myself I mean. I do not supply such particulars when I am asked for them by editors and compilers, simply because I am asked for them every day. If you want to prime Forgues, you may tell him without fear of anything wrong, that I was born at Portsmouth on the Seventh of February, 1812; that my father was in the Navy Pay Office; that I was taken by him to Chatham when I was very young, and lived and was educated there till I was twelve or thirteen, I suppose; that I was then put to a school near London, where (as at other places) I

distinguished myself like a brick; that I was put in the office of a solicitor, a friend of my father's, and didn't much like it: and after a couple of years (as well as I can remember) applied myself with a celestial or diabolical energy to the study of such things as would qualify me to be a first-rate parliamentary reporter—at that time a calling pursued by many clever men who were young at the Bar; that I made my début in the gallery (at about eighteen, I suppose), engaged on a voluminous publication no longer in existence, called the "Mirror of Parliament"; that when the "Morning Chronicle" was purchased by Sir John Easthope, and acquired a large circulation, I was engaged there, and that I remained there until I had begun to publish "Pickwick," when I found myself in a condition to relinquish that part of my labours; that I left the reputation behind me of being the best and most rapid reporter ever known, and that I could do anything in that way under any sort of circumstances, and often did. (I dare say I am at this present writing the best shorthand writer in the world.)

That I began, without any interest or introduction of any kind, to write fugitive pieces for the old "Monthly Magazine," when I was in the gallery for the "Mirror of Parliament"; that my faculty for descriptive writing was seized upon the moment I joined the "Morning Chronicle," and that I was liberally paid there and handsomely acknowledged, and wrote the greater part of the short descriptive "Sketches by Boz" in that paper; that I had been a writer when I was a mere baby, and always an actor from the same age; that I married the daughter of a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, who was the great friend and assistant of Scott, and who first made Lockhart known to him.

And that here I am.

Finally, if you want any dates of publication of books, tell Wills and he'll get them for you.

This is the first time I ever set down even these particulars, and, glancing them over, I feel like a wild beast in a caravan describing himself in the keeper's absence.

Ever faithfully.

PS.—I made a speech last night at the London Tavern, at the end of which all the company sat holding their napkins to their eyes with one hand, and putting the other

into their pockets. A hundred people or so contributed nine hundred pounds then and there.

To Mark Lemon.

"H. W." Office, *Second July*, 1856.

My dear Mark—I am concerned to hear that you are ill, that you sit down before fires and shiver, and that you have stated times for doing so, like the demons in the melodramas, and that you mean to take a week to get well in.

Make haste about it, like a dear fellow, and keep up your spirits, because I have made a bargain with Stanny and Webster that they shall come to Boulogne to-morrow week, Thursday the Tenth, and stay a week. And you know how much pleasure we shall all miss if you are not among us—at least for some part of the time.

If you find any unusually light appearance in the air at Brighton, it is a distant refraction (I have no doubt) of the gorgeous and shining surface of Tavistock House, now transcendently painted. The theatre partition is put up, and is a work of such terrific solidity, that I suppose it will be dug up, ages hence, from the ruins of London, by that Australian* of Macaulay's who is to be impressed by its ashes. I have wandered through the spectral halls of the Tavistock mansion two nights, with feelings of the profoundest depression. I have breakfasted there, like a criminal in Pentonville (only not so well). It is more like Westminster Abbey by midnight than the lowest-spirited man—say you at present for example—can well imagine.

There has been a wonderful robbery at Folkestone, by the new manager of the Pavilion, who succeeded Giovannini. He had in keeping £16,000 of a foreigner's, and bolted with it, as he supposed, but in reality with only £1400 of it. The Frenchman had previously bolted with the whole, which was the property of his mother. With him to England the Frenchman brought a "lady," who was, all the time and the same time, endeavoring to steal

* Macaulay, in his review of Ranke's "History of the Popes," says: "She [the Roman Catholic Church] may still exist in undiminished vigour, when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."—Ed.

all the money from him and bolt with it herself. The details are amazing, and all the money (a few pounds excepted) has been got back.—Ever, my dear Boy,

Your affectionate Friend.

To Washington Irving.

Tavistock House,* London, *Fifth July*, 1856.

My dear Irving—If you knew how often I write to you individually and personally in my books, you would be no more surprised in seeing this note than you were in seeing me do my duty by that flowery julep (in what I dreamily apprehend to have been a former state of existence) at Baltimore.

Will you let me present to you a cousin of mine, Mr. B——, who is associated with a merchant's house in New York? Of course he wants to see you, and know you. How can *I* wonder at that? How can anybody?

I had a long talk with Leslie at the last Academy dinner (having previously been with him in Paris), and he told me that you were flourishing. I suppose you know that he wears a moustache—so do I for the matter of that, and a beard too—and that he looks like a portrait of Don Quixote.

Holland House has four-and-twenty youthful pages in it now—twelve for my lord, and twelve for my lady; and no clergyman coils his leg up under his chair all dinner-time, and begins to uncurve it when the hostess goes. No wheeled chair runs smoothly in with that beaming face in it; and ——'s little cotton pocket-handkerchief helped to make (I believe) this very sheet of paper. A half-sad, half-ludicrous story of Rogers is all I will sully it with. You know, I dare say, that for a year or so before his death, he wandered, and lost himself like one of the Children in the Wood, grown up there and grown down again. He had Mrs. Procter and Mrs. Carlyle to breakfast with him one morning—only those two. Both excessively talkative, very quick and clever, and bent on entertaining him. When Mrs. Carlyle had flashed and shone before him for about three-quarters of an hour on one subject, he turned

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* Written at Boulogne, on paper with London address printed on it.—Ed.

his poor old eyes on Mrs. Procter, and pointing to the brilliant discourser with his poor old finger, said (indignantly), "Who is *she?*" Upon this, Mrs. Procter, cutting in, delivered (it is her own story) a neat oration on the life and writings of Carlyle, and enlightened him in her happiest and airiest manner; all of which he heard, staring in the dreariest silence, and then said (indignantly, as before), "And who are *you?*"—Ever, my dear Irving,

Most affectionately and truly yours.

To Mrs. Horne.

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square
October Twentieth, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Horne—I answer your note by return of post, in order that you may know that the Stereoscopic Nottage has not written to me yet. Of course I will not lose a moment in replying to him when he does address me.

We shall be greatly pleased to see you again. You have been very, very often in our thoughts and on our lips, during this long interval.

And "she" is near you, is she?* O I remember her well! And I am still of my old opinion! Passionately devoted to her sex as I am (they are the weakness of my existence). I still consider her a failure. She had some extraordinary christian name, which I forget. Lashed into verse by my feelings, I am inclined to write:

My heart disowns
Ophelia Jones;

only I think it was a more sounding name.

Are these the tones—
Volumnia Jones?

No. Again it seems doubtful.

God bless her bones,
Petronia Jones.

I think not.

Carve I on stones
Olympia Jones.

Can *that* be the name? Fond memory favours it more than any other. My love to her.—Ever, my dear Mrs. Horne,

Very faithfully yours.

* A friend of Mrs. Horne.—Ed.

To William Charles Kent.

Tavistock House, *Christmas Eve*, 1856.

My dear Sir—I cannot leave your letter unanswered, because I am really anxious that you should understand why I cannot comply with your request.*

Scarcely a week passes without my receiving requests from various quarters to sit for likenesses, to be taken by all the processes ever invented. Apart from my having an invincible objection to the multiplication of my countenance in the shop-window, I have not, between my avocations and my needful recreation, the time to comply with these proposals. At this moment there are three cases out of a vast number, in which I have said: "If I sit at all, it shall be to you first, to you second, and to you third." But I assure you, I consider myself almost as unlikely to go through these three conditional achievements as I am to go to China. Judge when I am likely to get to Mr. Watkins!

I highly esteem and thank you for your sympathy with my writings. I doubt if I have a more genial reader in the world. Very faithfully yours.

To M. de Cerjat.

Tavistock House,
Monday Night, Seventeenth January, 1857.

My dear Cerjat—So wonderfully do good (epistolary) intentions become confounded with bad execution, that I assure you I laboured under a perfect and most comfortable conviction that I had answered your Christmas Eve letter of 1855. More than that, in spite of your assertions to the contrary, I still strenuously believe that I did so! I have more than half a mind ("Little Dorrit" and my other occupations notwithstanding) to charge you with having forgotten my reply!! I have even a wild idea that Townshend reproached me, when the last old year was new, with writing to you instead of to him!!! We will argue it out, as well as we can argue anything without poor dear Haldimand, when I come back to Elysée. In my case, however, don't discontinue your annual letter, be-

* That Dickens should sit (which he afterwards did) to Mr. John Watkins for his photograph.—Ed.

cause it has become an expected and a delightful part of the season to me.

With one of the prettiest houses in London, and every conceivable (and inconceivable) luxury in it, Townshend is voluntarily undergoing his own sentence of transportation in Nervi, a beastly little place near Genoa, where you would as soon find a herd of wild elephants in any villa as comfort. He has a notion that he *must* be out of England in the winter, but I believe him to be altogether wrong (as I have just told him in a letter), unless he could just take his society with him.

Workmen are now battering and smashing down my theatre here, where we have just been acting a new play of great merit, done in what I may call (modestly speaking of the getting-up, and not of the acting) an unprecedented way. I believe that anything so complete has never been seen. We had an act at the North Pole, where the slightest and greatest thing the eye beheld were equally taken from the books of the Polar voyagers. Out of thirty people there were certainly not two who might not have gone straight to the North Pole itself, completely furnished for the winter! And now it is a mere chaos of scaffolding, ladders, beams, canvases, paint-pots, sawdust, artificial snow, gas-pipes, and ghastliness. I have taken such pains with it for these ten weeks in all my leisure hours, that I feel now shipwrecked—as if I had never been without a play on my hands before. A third topic comes up as this ceases.

Down at Gad's Hill, near Rochester, in Kent—Shakespeare's Gad's Hill, where Falstaff engaged in the robbery—is a quaint little country-house of Queen Anne's time. I happened to be walking past, a year and a half or so ago, with my sub-editor of "Household Words," when I said to him: "You see that house? It has always a curious interest for me, because when I was a small boy down in these parts I thought it the most beautiful house (I suppose because of its famous old cedar-trees) ever seen. And my poor father used to bring me to look at it, and used to say that if I ever grew up to be a clever man perhaps I might own that house, or such another house. In remembrance of which, I have always in passing looked to see if it was to be sold or let, and it has never been to me like any other house, and it has never changed at all."

We came back to town, and my friend went out to dinner. Next morning he came to me in great excitement, and said: "It is written that you were to have that house at Gad's Hill. The lady I had allotted to me to take down to dinner yesterday began to speak of that neighbourhood. 'You know it?' I said; 'I have been there to-day.' 'O yes,' said she, 'I know it very well. I was a child there, in the house they call Gad's Hill Place. My father was the rector, and lived there many years. He has just died, has left it to me, and I want to sell it.'" "So," says the sub-editor, "you must buy it. Now or never!" I did, and hope to pass next summer there, though I may, perhaps, let it afterwards, furnished, from time to time.

All about myself I find, and the little sheet nearly full! But I know, my dear Cerjat, the subject will have its interest for you, so I give it its swing. Mrs. Watson was to have been at the play, but most unfortunately had three children sick of gastric fever, and could not leave them. She was here some three weeks before, looking extremely well in the face, but rather thin. I hope you detected a remembrance of our happy visit to the Great St. Bernard in a certain number of "Little Dorrit"? Tell Mrs. Cerjat, with my love, that the opinions I have expressed to her on the subject of cows have become matured in my mind by experience and venerable age; and that I denounce the race as humbugs, who have been getting into poetry and all sorts of places without the smallest reason. Haldimand's housekeeper is an awful woman to consider. Pray give him our kindest regards and remembrances, if you ever find him in a mood to take it. We often, often talk of our old days at Lausanne. Adieu, my dear fellow. Ever cordially yours.

To the Earl of Carlisle.

Gravesend, Kent, *Wednesday, Fifteenth April*, 1857.

My dear Lord Carlisle—I am writing by the river-side for a few days, and at the end of last week —— appeared here with your note of introduction. I was not in the way; but as —— had come express from London with it, Mrs. Dickens opened it, and gave her (in the limited sense which was of no use to her) an audience. She did not quite seem to know what she wanted of me.

But she said she had understood at Stafford House that I had a theatre in which she could read; with a good deal of modesty and diffidence she at last got so far. Now, my little theatre turns my house out of window, costs fifty pounds to put up, and is only two months taken down; therefore, it is quite out of the question. This Mrs. Dickens explained, and also my profound inability to do anything for ——'s readings which they could not do for themselves. She appeared fully to understand the explanation, and indeed to have anticipated for herself how powerless I must be in such a case.

She described herself as being consumptive, and as being subject to an effusion of blood from the lungs; about the last condition, one would think, poor woman, for the exercise of public elocution as an art.

Between ourselves, I think the whole idea is a mistake, and have thought so from its first announcement. It has a fatal appearance of trading upon Uncle Tom, and am I not a man and a brother? which you may be by all means, and still not have the smallest claim to my attention as a public reader. The town is over-read from all the white squares on the draught-board; it has been considerably harried from all the black squares—now with the aid of old banjoes, and now with the aid of Exeter Hall; and I have a very strong impression that it is by no means to be laid hold of from this point of address. I myself, for example, am the meekest of men, and in abhorrence of slavery yield to no human creature, and yet I don't admit the sequence that I want Uncle Tom (or Aunt Tomasina) to expound "King Lear" to me. And I believe my case to be the case of thousands.

I trouble you with this much about it, because I am naturally desirous you should understand that if I could possibly have been of any service, or have suggested anything to this poor lady, I would not have lost the opportunity. But I cannot help her, and I assure you that I cannot honestly encourage her to hope. I fear her enterprise has no hope in it.

In your absence I have always followed you through the papers, and felt a personal interest and pleasure in the public affection in which you are held over there.*

* The Earl of Carlisle was at this time Viceroy of Ireland.—Ed.

At the same time I must confess that I should prefer to have you here, where good public men seem to be dismally wanted. I have no sympathy with demagogues, but am a grievous Radical, and think the political signs of the times to be just about as bad as the spirit of the people will admit of their being. In all other respects I am as healthy, sound, and happy as your kindness can wish. So you will set down my political despondency as my only disease.—I am, dear Lord Carlisle,

Yours very faithfully and obliged.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Tavistock House,
Friday Evening, Twenty-second May, 1857.

My dear Collins—Hooray!!!

From our lofty heights let us look down on the toiling masses with mild complacency—with gentle pity—with dove-eyed benignity.

To-morrow I am bound to Forster; on Sunday to solemn Chief Justice's in remote fastnesses beyond Norwood; on Monday to Geographical Societies dining to cheer on Lady Franklin's Expedition; on Tuesday to Procter's; on Wednesday, sir—on Wednesday—if the mind can devise anything sufficiently in the style of sybarite Rome in the days of its culminating voluptuousness, I am your man.

Shall we appoint to meet at the "Household Words" office at half-past five? I have an appointment with Russell [W. H.] at three that afternoon, which *may*, but which I don't think will, detain me a few minutes after my time. In that unlikely case, will you wait for me at the office?

If you can think of any tremendous way of passing the night, in the meantime, do. I don't care what it is. I give (for that night only) restraint to the Winds!

I am very much excited by what you tell me of Mr. F.'s Aunt.* I already look upon her as mine. Will you bring her with you?

Wills tells me that he thinks the principles of story-writing are scarcely understood in this age and Empire.

Ever faithfully.

* A picture of that character in "Little Dorrit," by an artist named Gale, bought by Charles Dickens through Collins.—Ed.

To W. C. Macready.

Tavistock House, *Monday, Thirteenth July*, 1857.

My dearest Macready—Many thanks for your Indian information. I shall act upon it in the most exact manner. Walter sails next Monday. Charley and I go down with him to Southampton next Sunday. We are all delighted with the prospect of seeing you at Gad's Hill. These are my Jerrold engagements:* On Friday, the twenty-fourth, I have to repeat my reading at St. Martin's Hall; on Saturday, the twenty-fifth, to repeat "The Frozen Deep"† at the Gallery of Illustration for the last time. On Thursday, the thirtieth, or Friday, the thirty-first, I shall probably read at Manchester. Deane, the general manager of the Exhibition, is going down to-night, and will arrange all the preliminaries for me. If you and I went down to Manchester together, and were there on a Sunday, he would give us the whole Exhibition to ourselves. It is probable, I think (as he estimates the receipts of a night at about seven hundred pounds), that we may, in about a fortnight or so after the reading, play "The Frozen Deep" at Manchester. But of this contingent engagement I at present know no more than you do.

Now, will you, upon this exposition of affairs, choose your own time for coming to us, and, when you have made your choice, write to me at Gad's Hill? I am going down this afternoon for rest (which means violent cricket with the boys) after last Saturday night; which was a teaser, but triumphant. The St. Martin's Hall audience was, I must confess, a very extraordinary thing. The two thousand and odd people were like one, and their enthusiasm was something awful.

Yet I have seen that before, too. Your young remembrance cannot recall the man; but he flourished in my day—a great actor, sir—a noble actor—thorough artist. I have seen him do wonders in that way. He retired from the stage early in life (having a monomaniacal delusion that he was old), and is said to be still living in your county.—Ever, my dearest Macready, Most affectionately yours.

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* After the death of Douglas Jerrold in June, Dickens took the management of a series of entertainments—including readings by himself—for the benefit of Jerrold's family.—Ed.

† Collins's play.—Ed.

To T. P. Cooke.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE MR. DOUGLAS JERROLD.

COMMITTEE'S OFFICE, GALLERY OF ILLUSTRATION,
REGENT STREET, *Thursday, Thirtieth July*, 1857.

MY DEAR MR. COOKE—I cannot rest satisfied this morning without writing to congratulate you on your admirable performance of last night.* It was so fresh and vigorous, so manly and gallant, that I felt as if it splashed against my theatre-heated face, along with the spray of the breezy sea. What I felt everybody felt; I should feel it quite an impertinence to take myself out of the crowd, therefore, if I could by any means help doing so. But I can't; so I hope you will feel that you bring me on yourself, and have only yourself to blame.

Always faithfully yours.

To W. C. Macready.

GAD'S HILL PLACE, HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,
Monday, Third August, 1857.

MY DEAREST MACREADY—I read at Manchester last Friday. As many thousand people were there as you like to name. The collection of pictures in the Exhibition is wonderful. And the power with which the modern English school asserts itself is a very gratifying and delightful thing to behold. The care for the common people, in the provision made for their comfort and refreshment, is also admirable and worthy of all commendation. But they want more amusement, and particularly (as it strikes me) *something in motion*, though it were only a twisting fountain. The thing is too still after their lives of machinery, and art flies over their heads in consequence.

I hope you have seen my tussle with the "Edinburgh." I saw the chance last Friday week, as I was going down to read the "Carol" in St. Martin's Hall. Instantly turned to, then and there, and wrote half the article. Flew out of bed early next morning, and finished it by

* One of the Jerrold benefit performances, in which the veteran Cooke sustained the character of William in Jerrold's "Black-eyed Susan" that he had "created" when the play was first produced (1829).—ED.

noon. Went down to the Gallery of Illustration (we acted that night), did the day's business, corrected the proofs in Polar costume in dressing-room, broke up two numbers of "Household Words" to get it out directly, played in "Frozen Deep" and "Uncle John," presided at supper of company, made no end of speeches, went home and gave in completely for four hours, then got sound asleep, and next day was as fresh as you used to be in the far-off days of your lusty youth.

Ever and ever affectionately.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Tavistock House, *Saturday, Twenty-ninth August*, 1857.

My dear Collins—Partly in the grim despair and restlessness of this subsidence from excitement, and partly for the sake of "Household Words," I want to cast about whether you and I can go anywhere—take any tour—see anything—whereon we could write something together. Have you any idea tending to any place in the world? Will you rattle your head and see if there is any pebble in it which we could wander away and play at marbles with? We want something for "Household Words," and I want to escape from myself. For when I *do* start up and stare myself seedily in the face, as happens to be my case at present, my blankness is inconceivable—indescribable—my misery amazing.

I shall be in town on Monday. Shall we talk then? Shall we talk at Gad's Hill? *What* shall we do? As I close this I am on my way back by train.

Ever faithfully.

To Henry Austin.

Gad's Hill Place, *Wednesday, Second September*, 1857.

My dear Henry—The second conspirator has been here this morning to ask whether you wish the windlass to be left in the yard, and whether you will want him and his mate any more, and, if so, when? Of course he says (rolling something in the form of a fillet in at one broken tooth all the while, and rolling it out at another) that they could wish fur to have the windlass if it warn't any ways a hill conwenience fur to fetch her away. I

have told him that if he will come back on Friday he shall have your reply. Will you, therefore, send it me by return of post? He says he'll "look up" (as if he was an astronomer) "a Friday arterdinner."

On Monday I am going away with Collins for ten days or a fortnight, on a "tour in search of an article" for "Household Words." We have not the least idea where we are going; but *he* says, "Let's look at the Norfolk coast," and *I* say, "Let's look at the back of the Atlantic." I don't quite know what I mean by that; but have a general impression that I mean something knowing.

I am horribly used up after the Jerrold business. Low spirits, low pulse, low voice, intense reaction. If I were not like Mr. Micawber, "falling back for a spring" on Monday, I think I should slink into a corner and cry.

Ever affectionately.

To Miss Hogarth.

Allonby, Cumberland,
Wednesday Night, Ninth September, 1857.

My dear Georgy—

* * * * * *

Think of Collins's usual luck with me! We went up a Cumberland mountain yesterday—a huge black hill, fifteen hundred feet high. We took for a guide a capital innkeeper hard by. It rained in torrents—as it only does rain in a hill country—the whole time. At the top, there were black mists and the darkness of night. It then came out that the innkeeper had not been up for twenty years, and he had lost his head and himself altogether; and we couldn't get down again. What wonders the Inimitable performed with his compass until it broke with the heat and wet of his pocket, no matter; it did break, and then we wandered about, until it was clear to the Inimitable that the night must be passed there, and the enterprising travellers probably die of cold. We took our own way about coming down, struck, and declared that the guide might wander where he would, but we would follow a watercourse we lighted upon, and which must come at last to the river. This necessitated amazing gymnastics; in the course of which performances, Collins fell into the

said watercourse with his ankle sprained, and the great ligament of the foot and leg swollen I don't know how big.

How I enacted Wardour* over again in carrying him down, and what a business it was to get him down; I may say in Gibbs's words: "Vi lascio a giudicare!" But he was got down somehow, and we got off the mountain somehow; and now I carry him to bed, and into and out of carriages, exactly like Wardour in private life. I don't believe he will stand for a month to come. He has had a doctor, and can wear neither shoe nor stocking, and has his foot wrapped up in a flannel waistcoat, and has a breakfast saucer of liniment, and a horrible dabbling of lotion incessantly in progress. We laugh at it all, but I doubt very much whether he can go on to Doncaster. It will be a miserable blow to our "H. W." scheme, and I say nothing about it as yet; but he is really so crippled that I doubt the getting him there. We have resolved to fall to work to-morrow morning and begin our writing; and there, for the present, that point rests.

This is a little place with fifty houses, five bathing-machines, five girls in straw hats, five men in straw hats, and no other company. The little houses are all in half-mourning—yellow stone on white stone, and black; and it reminds me of what Broadstairs might have been if it had not inherited a cliff, and had been an Irishman. But this is a capital little homely inn, looking out upon the sea; and we are really very comfortably lodged. We have a very obliging and comfortable landlady; and it is a clean nice place in a rough wild country. We came here haphazard, but could not have done better.

We lay last night at a place called Wigton—also in half-mourning—with the wonderful peculiarity that it had no population, no business, no streets to speak of; but five linen-drapers within range of our small windows, one linen-draper's next door, and five more linen-drapers round the corner. I ordered a night-light in my bedroom. A queer little old woman brought me one of the common Child's night-lights, and seeming to think that I looked at it with interest, said: "It's joost a vara

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* There was a situation in "The Frozen Deep" where Richard Wardour, played by Dickens, had to carry about Frank Aldersley in the person of Wilkie Collins.—Ed.

keeyourious thing, sir, and joost new coom oop. It'll burn awt hoors a' end, an no gootther, nor no waste, nor ony sike a thing, if you can creedit what I say, seein' the airticle." Ever affectionately.

To Miss Hogarth.

Lancaster, *Saturday Night, Twelfth September*, 1857.

My dear Georgy—I received your letter at Allonby yesterday, and was delighted to get it. We came back to Carlisle last night (to a capital inn, kept by Breach's brother), and came on here to-day. We are on our way to Doncaster; but, although it is not a hundred miles from here, we shall have, as well as I can make out the complicated list of trains, to sleep at Leeds to-morrow night.

Accustomed as you are to the homage which men delight to render to the Inimitable, you would be scarcely prepared for the proportions it assumes in this northern country. Station-masters assist him to alight from carriages, deputations await him in hotel entries, innkeepers bow down before him and put him into regal rooms, the town goes down to the platform to see him off, and Collins's ankle goes into the newspapers ! ! !

It is a great deal better than it was, and he can get into new hotels and up the stairs with two thick sticks, like an admiral in a farce. His spirits have improved in a corresponding degree, and he contemplates cheerfully the keeping house at Doncaster. I thought (as I told you) he would never have gone there, but he seems quite up to the mark now. Of course he can never walk out, or see anything of any place.

The landlady of the little inn at Allonby lived at Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, when I went down there before "Nickleby," and was smuggled into the room to see me, when I was secretly found out. She is an immensely fat woman now. "But I could tuck my arm round her waist then, Mr. Dickens," the landlord said when she told me the story as I was going to bed the night before last. "And can't you do it now," I said, "you insensible dog? Look at me! Here's a picture!" Accordingly, I got round as much of her as I could; and this gallant action

was the most successful I have ever performed, on the whole. I think it was the dullest little place I ever entered; and what with the monotony of an idle sea, and what with the monotony of another sea in the room (occasioned by Collins's perpetually holding his ankle over a pail of salt water, and laving it with a milk jug), I struck yesterday, and came away.

We are in a very remarkable old house here, with genuine old rooms and an uncommonly quaint staircase. I have a state bedroom, with two enormous red four-posters in it, each as big as Charley's room at Gad's Hill. Bellew is to preach here to-morrow. "And we know he is a friend of yours, sir," said the landlord, when he presided over the serving of the dinner (two little salmon trout; a sirloin steak; a brace of partridges; seven dishes of sweets; five dishes of dessert, led off by a bowl of peaches; and in the centre an enormous bride-cake—"We always have it here, sir," said the landlord, "custom of the house"). Collins turned pale, and estimated the dinner at half a guinea each.

This is the stupidest of letters, but all description is gone or going, into "The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices."

Ever affectionately, my dearest Georgy.

To Miss Hogarth.

Angel Hotel, Doncaster,
Tuesday, Fifteenth September, 1857.

My dear Georgy—I found your letter here on my arrival yesterday. I had hoped that the wall would have been almost finished by this time, and the additions to the house almost finished too—but patience, patience!

We have very good, clean, and quiet apartments here, on the second floor, looking down into the main street, which is full of horse jockeys, bettors, drunkards, and other blackguards, from morning to night—and all night. The races begin to-day and last till Friday, which is the Cup Day. I am not going to the course this morning, but have engaged a carriage (open, and pair) for to-morrow and Friday.

"The Frozen Deep's" author gets on as well as could

be expected. He can hobble up and down stairs when absolutely necessary, and limps to his bedroom on the same floor. He talks of going to the theatre to-night in a cab, which will be the first occasion of his going out, except to travel, since the accident. He sends his kind regards and thanks for enquiries and condolence. I am perpetually tidying the rooms after him, and carrying all sorts of untidy things which belong to him into his bedroom, which is a picture of disorder. You will please to imagine mine, airy and clean, little dressing-room attached, eight water-jugs (I never saw such a supply), capital sponge-bath, perfect arrangement, and exquisite neatness. We breakfast at half-past eight, and fall to work for "H. W." afterwards. Then I go out, and—hem! look for subjects.

Ever affectionately.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Tavistock House, *Sunday, Seventeenth January*, 1858.

My dear Wilkie—I am very sorry to receive so bad an account of the foot; but I hope it is all in the past tense now.

I met with an incident the other day, which I think is a good deal in your way, for introduction either into a long or short story. Dr. Sutherland and Dr. Monro went over St. Luke's with me (only last Friday), to show me some distinctly and remarkably-developed types of insanity. Among other patients, we passed a deaf and dumb man, now afflicted with incurable madness too, of whom they said that it was only when his madness began to develop itself in strongly-marked mad actions, that it began to be suspected, "though it had been there, no doubt, some time." This led me to consider, suspiciously, what employment he had been in, and so to ask the question. "Aye," says Dr. Sutherland, "that is the most remarkable thing of all, Mr. Dickens. He was employed in the transmission of electric-telegraph messages; and it is impossible to conceive what delirious despatches that man may have been sending about all over the world!"

Rejoiced to hear such good report of the play.

Ever faithfully.

To Edmund Yates.

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, Twenty-eighth April, 1858.

My dear Yates—For a good many years I have suffered a great deal from charities, but never anything like what I suffer now. The amount of correspondence they inflict upon me is really incredible. But this is nothing. Benevolent men get behind the piers of the gates, lying in wait for my going out; and when I peep shrinkingly from my study-windows, I see their pot-bellied shadows projected on the gravel. Benevolent bullies drive up in hansom cabs (with engraved portraits of their benevolent institutions hanging over the aprons, like banners on their outward walls), and stay long at the door. Benevolent area-sneaks get lost in the kitchens and are found to impede the circulation of the knife-cleaning machine. My man has been heard to say (at The Burton Arms) "that if it was a wicious place, well and good—*that* an't door work; but that wen all the Christian wirtues is always a-shoulderin' and a-helberin' on you in the 'all, a-tryin' to git past you and cut upstairs into master's room, why no wages as you couldn't name wouldn't make it up to you."

Persecuted ever.

To M. de Cerjat.

Gad's Hill, *Wednesday, Seventh July*, 1858.

My dear Cerjat—I should vainly try to tell you—so I *won't* try—how affected I have been by your warm-hearted letter, or how thoroughly well convinced I always am of the truth and earnestness of your friendship. I thank you, my dear, dear fellow, with my whole soul. I fervently return that friendship and I highly cherish it.

You want to know all about me? I am still reading in London every Thursday, and the audiences are very great, and the success immense. On the Second of August I am going away on a tour of some four months in England, Ireland, and Scotland. I shall read, during that time, not fewer than four or five times a week. It will be sharp work; but probably a certain musical clinking will come of it, which will mitigate the hardship.

At this present moment I am on my little Kentish freehold (*not* in top-boots, and not particularly prejudiced that I know of), looking on as pretty a view out of my study window as you will find in a long day's English ride. My little place is a grave red brick house, which I have added to and stuck bits upon in all manner of ways, so that it is as pleasantly irregular, and as violently opposed to all architectural ideas, as the most hopeful man could possibly desire. The robbery was committed before the door, on the man with the treasure, and Falstaff ran away from the identical spot of ground now covered by the room in which I write. A little rustic alehouse, called The Sir John Falstaff, is over the way—has been over the way, ever since, in honour of the event. Cobham Woods and Park are behind the house; the distant Thames in front; the Medway, with Rochester, and its old castle and cathedral, on one side. The whole stupendous property is on the old Dover Road.

The blessed woods and fields have done me a world of good, and I am quite myself again. The children are all as happy as children can be. My eldest daughter, Mary, keeps house, with a state and gravity becoming that high position; wherein she is assisted by her sister Katie, and by her aunt Georgina, who is, and always has been, like another sister. Two big dogs, a bloodhound and a St. Bernard, direct from a convent of that name, where I think you once were, are their principal attendants in the green lanes. These latter instantly untie the neckerchiefs of all tramps and prowlers who approach their presence, so that they wander about without any escort, and drive big horses in basket-phaetons through murderous byways, and never come to grief. They are very curious about your daughters, and send all kinds of loves to them and to Mrs. Cerjat, in which I heartily join.

You will have read in the papers that the Thames in London is most horrible. I have to cross Waterloo or London Bridge to get to the railroad when I come down here, and I can certify that the offensive smells, even in that short whiff, have been of a most head-and-stomach-distending nature. Nobody knows what is to be done; at least everybody knows a plan, and everybody else knows it won't do; in the meantime cartloads of chloride of lime are shot into the filthy stream, and do something

GADSHILL PLACE, DICKENS'S RESIDENCE FROM 1857.
View from the rear, showing Dickens's latest improvements.

I hope. You will know, before you get this, that the American telegraph line has parted again, at which most men are sorry, but very few surprised. This is all the news, except that there is an Italian Opera at Drury Lane, price eighteenpence to the pit, where Viardot, by far the greatest artist of them all, sings, and which is full when the dear opera can't let a box; and except that the weather has been exceptionally hot, but is now quite cool. On the top of this hill it has been cold, actually cold at night, for more than a week past.

My dear Cerjat, I have written lightly enough, because I want you to know that I am becoming cheerful and hearty. God bless you! I love you, and I know that you love me. Ever your attached and affectionate.

To John Forster.

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London,
Sunday, Tenth October, 1858.

My dear Forster—As to the truth of the readings,* I cannot tell you what the demonstrations of personal regard and respect are. How the densest and most uncomfortably-packed crowd will be hushed in an instant when I show my face. How the youth of colleges, and the old men of business in the town, seem equally unable to get near enough to me when they cheer me away at night. How common people and gentlefolks will stop me in the streets and say: "Mr. Dickens, will you let me touch the hand that has filled my home with so many friends?" And if you saw the mothers, and fathers, and sisters, and brothers in mourning, who invariably come to "Little Dombey," and if you studied the wonderful expression of comfort and reliance with which they hang about me, as if I had been with them, all kindness and delicacy, at their own little death-bed, you would think it one of the strangest things in the world.

As to the mere effect, of course I don't go on doing the thing so often without carefully observing myself and the people too in every little thing, and without (in consequence) greatly improving in it.

At Aberdeen we were crammed to the street twice in

* Dickens read in many places during the year 1858.—Ed.

one day. At Perth (where I thought when I arrived there literally could be nobody to come), the nobility came posting in from thirty miles round, and the whole town came and filled an immense hall. As to the effect, if you had seen them after Lilian died, in "The Chimes," or when Scrooge woke and talked to the boy outside the window, I doubt if you would ever have forgotten it. And at the end of "Dombey" yesterday afternoon, in the cold light of day, they all got up, after a short pause, gentle and simple, and thundered and waved their hats with that astonishing heartiness and fondness for me, that for the first time in all my public career they took me completely off my legs, and I saw the whole eighteen hundred of them reel on one side as if a shock from without had shaken the hall.

The dear girls have enjoyed themselves immensely, and their trip has been a great success. I hope I told you (but I forget whether I did or no) how splendidly Newcastle* came out. I am reminded of Newcastle at the moment because they joined me there.

I am anxious to get to the end of my readings, and to be at home again, and able to sit down and think in my own study. But the fatigue, though sometimes very great indeed, hardly tells upon me at all. And although all our people, from Smith downwards, have given in, more or less, at times, I have never been in the least unequal to the work, though sometimes sufficiently disinclined for it. My kindest and best love to Mrs. Forster.

Ever affectionately.

To Blanchard Jerrold.

Tavistock House, *Twenty-sixth November*, 1858.†

* * * * * *

It has been a gloomy task, and has made my heart heavy. It is not likely that I can furnish you with any new particulars of interest concerning your lamented father. Such details of his life and struggles as I have often heard from himself are better known to you than

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* The birthplace of Mr. Forster.—Ed.

† Printed in "The Life of Douglas Jerrold," by Blanchard Jerrold.—Ed.

to me; and my praises of him can make no new sound in your ears.

But as you wish me to note down for you my last remembrance and experience of him, I proceed to do so. It is natural that my thoughts should first rush back (as they instantly do) to the days when he began to be known to me, and to the many happy hours I afterwards passed in his society.

Few of his friends, I think, can have had more favourable opportunities of knowing him, in his gentlest and most affectionate aspect, than I have had. He was one of the gentlest and most affectionate of men. I remember very well that when I first saw him, in or about the year 1835—when I went into his sick-room in St. Michael's Grove, Brompton, and found him propped up in a great chair, bright-eyed, and eager and quick in spirit, but very lame in body—he gave me an impression of tenderness. It never became dissociated from him. There was nothing cynical or sour in his heart as I knew it. In the company of children and young people he was particularly happy, and showed to extraordinary advantage. He never was so gay, so sweet-tempered, so pleasing, and so pleased as then. Among my own children I had observed this many and many a time. When they and I came home from Italy in 1845, your father went to Brussels to meet us in company with our friends, Mr. Forster and Mr. Maclise. We all travelled together about Belgium for a little while, and all came home together. He was the delight of the children all the time, and they were his delight. He was in his most brilliant spirits, and I doubt if he were ever more humorous in his life. But the most enduring impression that he left upon us who were grown up—and we have all often spoken of it since—was that Jerrold, in his amiable capacity of being easily pleased, in his freshness, in his good-nature, in his cordiality, and in the unrestrained openness of his heart, had quite captivated us.

Of his generosity I had a proof, within these two or three years, which it saddens me to think of now. There had been an estrangement between us—not on any personal subject, and not involving an angry word—and a good many months had passed without my once seeing him in the street, when it fell out that we dined, each with

his own separate party, in the strangers' room of a club. Our chairs were almost back to back, and I took mine after he was seated at dinner. I said not a word (I am sorry to remember) and did not look that way. Before we had sat so, long, he openly wheeled his chair round, stretched out both his hands in a most engaging manner, and said aloud, with a bright and loving face that I can see as I write to you: "For God's sake, let us be friends again! Life's not long enough for this!"

On Sunday, May 31st, 1857, I had an appointment to meet him at the Gallery of Illustration, in Regent Street. We had been advising our friend, Mr. Russell, in the condensation of his lectures on the war in the Crimea, and we had engaged with him to go over the last of the series there at one o'clock that day. Arriving some minutes before the time, I found your father sitting alone in the hall. "There must be some mistake," he said; no one else was there; the place was locked up; he had tried all the doors; and he had been waiting there a quarter of an hour by himself. I sat down by him in a niche in the staircase, and he told me that he had been very unwell for three or four days. A window in his study had been newly painted, and the smell of the paint (he thought it must be that) had filled him with nausea and turned him sick, and he felt quite weak and giddy through not having been able to retain any food. He was a little subdued at first and out of spirits; but we sat there half an hour talking, and when we came out together he was quite himself.

In the shadow I had not observed him closely; but when we got into the sunshine of the streets, I saw that he looked ill. We were both engaged to dine with Mr. Russell at Greenwich, and I thought him so ill then that I advised him not to go, but to let me take him or send him home in a cab. He complained, however, of having turned so weak—we had now strolled as far as Leicester Square—that he was fearful he might faint in the cab, unless I could get him some restorative, and unless he could "keep it down." I deliberated for a moment whether to turn back to the Athenæum, where I could have got a little brandy for him, or to take him on into Covent Garden for the purpose; meanwhile, he stood leaning against the rails of the enclosure, looking for the

moment very ill indeed. Finally, we walked on to Covent Garden, and before we had gone fifty yards he was very much better. On our way Mr. Russell joined us. He was then better still, and walked between us unassisted. I got him a hard biscuit and a little weak cold brandy-and-water, and begged him by all means to try to eat. He broke up and ate the greater part of the biscuit, and then was much refreshed and comforted by the brandy; he said that he felt the sickness was overcome at last, and that he was quite a new man; it would do him good to have a few quiet hours in the air, and he would go with us to Greenwich. I still tried to dissuade him, but he was by this time bent upon it, and his natural colour had returned, and he was very hopeful and confident.

We strolled through the Temple on our way to a boat, and I have a lively recollection of him stamping about Elm Tree Court, with his hat in one hand and the other pushing his hair back, laughing in his heartiest manner at a ridiculous remembrance we had in common, which I had presented in some exaggerated light to divert him. We found our boat and went down the river, and looked at the Leviathan,* which was building, and talked all the way. It was a bright day, and as soon as we reached Greenwich we got an open carriage and went out for a drive about Shooter's Hill. In the carriage Mr. Russell read us his lecture, and we discussed it with great interest; we planned out the ground of Inkermann on the heath, and your father was very earnest indeed. The subject held us so that we were graver than usual; but he broke out at intervals in the same hilarious way as in the Temple, and he over and over again said to me, with great satisfaction, how happy he was that he had "quite got over that paint!"

The dinner-party was a large one, and I did not sit near him at table. But he and I arranged before we went in to dinner that he was only to eat of some simple dish that we agreed upon, and was only to drink sherry-and-water. We broke up very early, and before I went away with Mr. Leech, who was to take me to London, I went round to Jerrold, for whom some one else had a seat in a carriage, and put my hand upon his shoulder, asking him how he

* Afterwards called the Great Eastern.—Ed.

was. He turned round to show me a glass beside him with a little wine-and-water in it. "I have kept to the prescription; it has answered as well as this morning's, my dear old boy; I have quite got over the paint, and I am perfectly well." He was really elated by the relief of having recovered, and was as quietly happy as I ever saw him. We exchanged "God bless you!" and shook hands.

I went down to Gad's Hill next morning, where he was to write to me after a little while, appointing his own time for coming to see me there. A week afterwards another passenger in the railway carriage in which I was on my way to London Bridge opened his morning paper and said, "Douglas Jerrold is dead!"

* * * * * *

To Frank Stone, A.R.A.

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Monday, Thirteenth December, 1858.

My dear Stone—Many thanks for these discourses. They are very good, I think, as expressing what many men have felt and thought; otherwise not specially remarkable. They have one fatal mistake, which is a canker at the root of their ever being widely useful. Half the misery and hypocrisy of the Christian world arises (as I take it) from a stubborn determination to refuse the New Testament as a sufficient guide in itself, and to force the Old Testament into alliance with it—whereof comes all manner of camel-swallowing and of gnat-straining. But so to resent this miserable error, or to (by any implication) depreciate the divine goodness and beauty of the New Testament, is to commit even a worse error. And to class Jesus Christ with Mahomet is simply audacity and folly. I might as well hoist myself on to a high platform, to inform my disciples that the lives of King George the Fourth and of King Alfred the Great belonged to one and the same category. Ever affectionately.

To Arthur Smith.

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, Twenty-sixth January, 1859.

My dear Arthur—Will you first read the enclosed letters, having previously welcomed, with all possible

cordiality, the bearer, Mr. Thomas C. Evans, from New York?

You having read them, let me explain that Mr. Fields is a highly respectable and influential man, one of the heads of the most classical and most respected publishing house in America; that Mr. Richard Grant White is a man of high reputation; and that Felton is the Greek Professor in their Cambridge University, perhaps the most distinguished scholar in the States.

The address to myself, referred to in one of the letters, being on its way, it is quite clear that I must give some decided and definite answer to the American proposal. Now, will you carefully discuss it with Mr. Evans before I enter on it at all? Then, will you dine here with him on Sunday—which I will propose to him—and arrange to meet at half-past four for an hour's discussion?

The points are these:

First. I have a very grave question within myself whether I could go to America at all.

Secondly. If I did go, I could not possibly go before the autumn.

Thirdly. If I did go, how long must I stay?

Fourthly. If the stay were a short one, could *you* go?

Fifthly. What is his project? What could I make? What occurs to you upon his proposal?

I have told him that the business arrangements of the readings have been from the first so entirely in your hands, that I enter upon nothing connected with them without previous reference to you. Ever faithfully.

To Mrs. Cowden Clarke.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Twenty-first August, 1859.

My dear Mrs. Cowden Clarke—I cannot tell you how much pleasure I have derived from the receipt of your earnest letter. Do not suppose it possible that such praise can be "less than nothing" to your old manager. It is more than all else.

Here in my little country house on the summit of the hill where Falstaff did the robbery, your words have come to me in the most appropriate and delightful manner. When the story can be read all at once, and my meaning

can be better seen, I will send it to you (sending it to Dean Street, if you tell me of no better way), and it will be a hearty gratification to think that you and your good husband are reading it together. For you must both take notice, please, that I have a reminder of you always before me. On my desk, here, stand two green leaves* which I every morning station in their ever-green place at my elbow. The leaves on the oak-trees outside the window are less constant than these, for they are with me through the four seasons.

Lord! to think of the bygone day when you were stricken mute (was it not at Glasgow?) and, being mounted on a tall ladder at a practicable window, stared at Forster, and with a noble constancy refused to utter word! Like the monk among the pictures with Wilkie, I begin to think *that* the real world, and this the sham that goes out with the lights.

God bless you both. Ever faithfully yours.

To Miss Dickens and Miss Katie Dickens.

Albion, Broadstairs, *Friday, Second September*, 1859.

My dearest Mamie and Katie—I have been "moved" here, and am now (Ballard having added to the hotel a house we lived in three years) in our old dining-room and sitting-room, and our old drawing-room as a bedroom. My cold is so bad, both in my throat and in my chest, that I can't bathe in the sea; Tom Collin dissuaded me—thought it "bad"—but I get a heavy shower-bath at Mrs. Crampton's every morning. The baths are still hers and her husband's, but they have retired and live in "Nuckells"—are going to give a stained-glass window, value three hundred pounds, to St. Peter's Church. Tom Collin is of opinion that the Miss Dickenses has growed two fine young women—leastwise, asking pardon, ladies. An evangelical family of most disagreeable girls prowl about here and trip people up with tracts, which they put in the path with stones upon them to keep them from blowing away. Charles Collins and I having seen a bill

* A porcelain paper-weight with two green leaves enamelled on it, between which were placed the initials C. D. A present from Mrs. C. Clarke.—Ed.

yesterday—about a mesmeric young lady who did feats, one of which was set forth in the bill, in a line by itself, as

THE RIGID LEGS

—were overpowered with curiosity, and resolved to go. It came off in the Assembly Room, now more exquisitely desolate than words can describe. Eighteen shillings was the "take." Behind a screen among the company, we heard mysterious gurglings of water before the entertainment began, and then a slippery sound which occasioned me to whisper C. C. (who laughed in the most ridiculous manner), "Soap." It proved to be the young lady washing herself. She must have been wonderfully dirty, for she took a world of trouble, and didn't come out clean after all—in a wretched dirty muslin frock, with blue ribbons. She was the alleged mesmeriser, and a boy who distributed bills the alleged mesmerised. It was a most preposterous imposition, but more ludicrous than any poor sight I ever saw. The boy is clearly out of a pantomime, and when he pretended to be in a mesmeric state, made the company back by going in among them head over heels, backwards, half a dozen times, in a most insupportable way. The pianist had struck; and the manner in which the lecturer implored "some lady" to play a "polker," and the manner in which no lady would; and in which the few ladies who were there sat with their hats on, and the elastic under their chins, as if it were going to blow, is never to be forgotten. I have been writing all the morning, and am going for a walk to Ramsgate. This is a beast of a letter, but I am not well, and have been addling my head.—Ever, dear Girls,

Your affectionate Father.

To Frank Stone, A.R.A.

Peterborough,
Wednesday Evening, Nineteenth October, 1859.

My dear Stone—We had a splendid rush last night. They were a far finer audience than on the previous night; I think the finest I have ever read to. They took every word of the "Dombey" in quite an amazing manner, and after the child's death, paused a little, and then set up a shout that it did one good to hear. Mrs. Gamp

then set in with a roar, which lasted till I had done. I think everybody for the time forgot everything but the matter in hand. It was as fine an instance of thorough absorption in a fiction as any of us are likely to see ever again.

—— (in an exquisite red mantle), accompanied by her sister (in another exquisite red mantle) and by the deaf lady (who leaned a black head-dress, exactly like an old-fashioned tea-urn without a top, against the wall), was charming. HE* couldn't get at her on account of the pressure. HE tried to peep at her from the side door, but she (ha, ha, ha!) was unconscious of his presence. I read to her, and goaded him to madness. He is just sane enough to send his kindest regards.

This is a place which—except the cathedral, with the loveliest front I ever saw—is like the back door to some other place. It is, I should hope, the deadest and most utterly inert little town in the British dominions. The magnates have taken places, and the bookseller is of opinion that "such is the determination to do honour to Mr. Dickens that the doors *must* be opened half an hour before the appointed time." You will picture to yourself Arthur's quiet indignation at this, and the manner in which he remarked to me at dinner, "that he turned away twice Peterborough last night."

A very pretty room—though a Corn Exchange—and a room we should have been glad of at Cambridge, as it is large, bright, and cheerful, and wonderfully well lighted.

No more at present from, Yours affectionately.

To Monsieur Régnier.

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, Sixteenth November, 1859.

My dear Régnier—I send you ten thousand thanks for your kind and explicit letter. What I particularly wished to ascertain from you was, whether it is likely the Censor would allow such a piece to be played in Paris. In the case of its being likely, then I wished to have the piece as well done as possible, and would even have proposed to come to Paris to see it rehearsed. But I very

* Mr. Arthur Smith, Dickens's secretary.—Ed.

much doubted whether the general subject would not be objectionable to the Government, and what you write with so much sagacity and with such care convinces me at once that its representation would be prohibited. Therefore I altogether abandon and relinquish the idea. But I am just as heartily and cordially obliged to you for your interest and friendship, as if the book had been turned into a play five hundred times. I again thank you ten thousand times, and am quite sure that you are right. I only hope you will forgive my causing you so much trouble, after your hard work.

Macready, we are all happy to hear from himself, is going to leave the dreary tomb in which he lives, at Sherborne, and to remove to Cheltenham, a large and handsome place, about four or five hours' railway journey from London, where his poor girls will at least see and hear some life. Madame Céleste was with me yesterday, wishing to dramatise "A Tale of Two Cities" for the Lyceum, after bringing out the Christmas pantomime. I gave her my permission and the book; but I fear that her company (troupe) is a very poor one.

This is all the news I have, except (which is no news at all) that I feel as if I had not seen you for fifty years, and that

I am ever your attached and faithful friend.

To M. de Cerjat.

Tavistock House, *Thursday, Third May*, 1860.

My dear Cerjat—The date of this letter would make me horribly ashamed of myself, if I didn't know that *you* know how difficult letter-writing is to one whose trade it is to write.

You asked me on Christmas Eve about my children. My second daughter is going to be married in the course of the summer to Charles Collins, the brother of Wilkie Collins, the novelist. The father was one of the most famous painters of English green lanes and coast pieces. He was bred an artist; is a writer, too, and does "The Eye Witness" in "All the Year Round." He is a gentleman, accomplished, and amiable. My eldest daughter has not yet started any conveyance on the road to matrimony (that I know of); but it is likely enough that she

will, as she is very agreeable and intelligent. They are both very pretty. My eldest boy, Charley, has been in Barings's house for three or four years, and is now going to Hong Kong, strongly backed up by Barings, to buy tea on his own account as a means of forming a connection and seeing more of the practical part of a merchant's calling, before starting in London for himself. His brother Frank (Jeffrey's godson) I have just recalled from France and Germany, to come and learn business, and qualify himself to join his brother on his return from the Celestial Empire. The next boy, Sydney Smith, is designed for the navy, and is in training at Portsmouth, awaiting his nomination. He is about three foot high, with the biggest eyes ever seen, and is known in the Portsmouth parts as "Young Dickens, who can do everything."

Another boy is at school in France; the youngest of all has a private tutor at home. I have forgotten the second in order, who is in India. He went out as ensign of a non-existent native regiment, got attached to the Forty-second Highlanders, one of the finest regiments in the Queen's service, has remained with them ever since, and got made a lieutenant by the chances of the rebellious campaign, before he was eighteen. Miss Hogarth, always Miss Hogarth, is the guide, philosopher, and friend of all the party, and a very close affection exists between her and the girls. I doubt if she will ever marry. I don't know whether to be glad of it or sorry for it.

I have laid down my pen and taken a long breath after writing this family history. I have also considered whether there are any more children, and I don't think there are. If I should remember two or three others presently, I will mention them in a postscript.

We think Townshend looking a little the worse for the winter, and we perceive Bully to be decidedly old upon his legs, and of a most diabolical turn of mind. When they first arrived the weather was very dark and cold, and kept them indoors. It has since turned very warm and bright, but with a dusty and sharp east wind. They are still kept indoors by this change, and I begin to wonder what change will let them out.

Public matters here are thought to be rather improving; the deep mistrust of the gentleman in Paris being counteracted by the vigorous state of preparation into which

the nation is getting. You will have observed, of course, that we establish a new defaulter in respect of some great trust, about once a quarter. The last one, the cashier of a City bank, is considered to have distinguished himself greatly, a quarter of a million of money being high game.

No, my friend, I have not shouldered my rifle yet, but I should do so on more pressing occasion. Every other man in the row of men I know—if they were all put in a row—is a volunteer, though. There is a tendency rather to overdo the wearing of the uniform, but that is natural enough in the case of the youngest men. The turn-out is generally very creditable indeed. At the ball they had (in a perfectly unventilated building), their new leather belts and pouches smelt so fearfully that it was, as my eldest daughter said, like shoemaking in a great prison. She, consequently, distinguished herself by fainting away in the most inaccessible place in the whole structure, and being brought out (horizontally) by a file of volunteers, like some slain daughter of Albion whom they were carrying into the street to rouse the indignant valour of the populace.

Lord, my dear Cerjat, when I turn to that page of your letter where you write like an ancient sage in whom the fire has paled into a meek-eyed state of coolness and virtue, I half laugh and half cry! *You* old! *You* a sort of hermit? Boh! Get out.

When shall you and I meet, and where? Must I come to see Townshend? I begin to think so.—Ever, my dear Cerjat, Your affectionate and faithful.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Gad's Hill, *Tuesday, Fifth June*, 1860.

My dear Bulwer Lytton—I am very much interested and gratified by your letter concerning "A Tale of Two Cities." I do not quite agree with you on two points, but that is no deduction from my pleasure.

In the first place, although the surrender of the feudal privileges (on a motion seconded by a nobleman of great rank) was the occasion of a sentimental scene, I see no reason to doubt, but on the contrary, many reasons to believe, that some of these privileges had been used to the frightful oppression of the peasant, quite as near

to the time of the Revolution as the doctor's narrative, which, you will remember, dates long before the Terror. And surely when the new philosophy was the talk of the salons and the slang of the hour, it is not unreasonable or unallowable to suppose a nobleman wedded to the old cruel ideas, and representing the time going out, as his nephew represents the time coming in; as to the condition of the peasant in France generally at that day, I take it that if anything be certain on earth it is certain that it was intolerable. No *ex post facto* enquiries and provings by figures will hold water, surely, against the tremendous testimony of men living at the time.

There is a curious book printed at Amsterdam, written to make out no case whatever, and tiresome enough in its literal dictionary-like minuteness, scattered up and down the pages of which is full authority for my marquis. This is "Mercier's Tableau de Paris." Rousseau is the authority for the peasant's shutting up his house when he had a bit of meat. The tax-taker was the authority for the wretched creature's impoverishment.

I am not clear, and I never have been clear, respecting that canon of fiction which forbids the interposition of accident in such a case as Madame Defarge's death. Where the accident is inseparable from the passion and emotion of the character, where it is strictly consistent with the whole design, and arises out of some culminating proceeding on the part of the character which the whole story has led up to, it seems to me to become, as it were, an act of divine justice. And when I use Miss Pross (though this is quite another question) to bring about that catastrophe, I have the positive intention of making that half-comic intervention a part of the desperate woman's failure, and of opposing that mean death—instead of a desperate one in the streets, which she wouldn't have minded—to the dignity of Carton's wrong or right; this *was* the design, and seemed to be in the fitness of things.

Now, as to the reading. I am sorry to say that it is out of the question this season. I have had an attack of rheumatism—quite a stranger to me—which remains hovering about my left side, after having doubled me up in the back, and which would disable me from standing for two hours. I have given up all dinners and town

engagements, and come to my little Falstaff House here, sensible of the necessity of country training all through the summer. Smith would have proposed any appointment to see you on the subject, but he has been dreadfully ill with tic. Whenever I read in London, I will gladly put a night aside for your purpose, and we will plot to connect your name with it, and give it some specialty. But this could not be before Christmas time, as I should not be able to read sooner, for in the hot weather it would be useless. Let me hear from you about this when you have considered it. It would greatly diminish the expenses, remember. Ever affectionately and faithfully.

To W. H. Wills.

Office of "All the Year Round," *
Tuesday, Fourth September, 1860.

My dear Wills—Your description of your sea-castle makes your room here look uncommonly dusty. Likewise the costermongers in the street outside, and the one customer (drunk, with his head on the table) in the Crown Coffee House over the way, in York Street, have an earthy, and, as I may say, a land-lubberly aspect. Cape Horn, to the best of *my* belief, is a tremendous way off, and there are more bricks and cabbage-leaves between this office and that dismal point of land than *you* can possibly imagine.

Coming here from the station this morning, I met, coming from the execution of the Wentworth murderer, such a tide of ruffians as never could have flowed from any point but the gallows. Without any figure of speech it turned one white and sick to behold them.

Tavistock House is cleared to-day, and possession delivered up. I must say that in all things the purchaser has behaved thoroughly well, and that I cannot call to mind any occasion when I have had money dealings with a Christian that have been so satisfactory, considerate, and trusting.

I am ornamented at present with one of my most intensely preposterous and utterly indescribable colds. If you were to make a voyage from Cape Horn to Welling-

* "Household Words" was incorporated with "All the Year Round" in 1859.—Ed.

ton Street, you could scarcely recognise in the bowed form, weeping eyes, rasped nose, and snivelling wretch whom you would encounter here, the once gay and sparkling, etc., etc. . . .

Yesterday I burnt, in the field at Gad's Hill, the accumulated papers and letters of twenty years. They sent up a smoke like the genie when he got out of the casket on the seashore; and as it was an exquisite day when I began, and rained very heavily when I finished, I suspect my correspondence of having overcast the face of the heavens. Ever faithfully.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Wednesday, Twenty-fourth October, 1860.

My dear Wilkie—I have been down to Brighton to see Forster, and found your letter there on arriving by express this morning. I also found a letter from Georgina, describing that Mary's horse went down suddenly on a stone, and how Mary was thrown, and had her riding-habit torn to pieces, and has a deep cut just above the knee—fortunately not in the knee itself, which is doing exceedingly well, but which will probably incapacitate her from walking for days and days to come. It is well it was no worse. The accident occurred at Milton, near Gravesend, and they found Mary in a public-house there, wonderfully taken care of and looked after.

Your account of your passage goes to my heart through my stomach. What a pity I was not there on board to present that green-visaged, but sweet-tempered and uncomplaining spectacle of imbecility, at which I am so expert under stormy circumstances, in the poet's phrase:

> As I sweep
> Through the deep
> When the stormy winds do blow.

What a pity I am not there, at Meurice's, to sleep the sleep of infancy through the long plays where the gentlemen stand with their backs to the mantelpieces. What a pity I am not with you to make a third at the Trois Frères, and drink no end of bottles of Bordeaux, without ever getting a touch of redness in my (poet's phrase again) "innocent nose." But I must go down to Gad's to-night,

and get to work again. Four weekly numbers have been ground off the wheel, and at least another must be turned before we meet. They shall be yours in the slumberous railway-carriage, when we start on the First of November.

I don't think Forster is at all in good health. He was tremendously hospitable and hearty. I walked six hours and a half on the downs yesterday, and never stopped or sat. Early in the morning, before breakfast, I went to the nearest baths to get a shower-bath. They kept me waiting longer than I thought reasonable, and seeing a man in a cap in the passage, I went to him and said: "I really must request that you'll be good enough to see about this shower-bath"; and it was Hullah! waiting for another bath.

Rumours were brought into the house on Saturday night, that there was a "ghost" up at Larkins's monument. Plorn was frightened to death, and I was apprehensive of the ghost's spreading and coming here, and causing "warning" and desertion among the servants. Frank was at home, and Andrew Gordon was with us. Time, nine o'clock. Village talk and credulity, amazing. I armed the two boys with a short stick apiece, and shouldered my double-barreled gun, well loaded with shot. "Now observe," says I to the domestics, "if anybody is playing tricks and has got a head, I'll blow it off." Immense impression. New groom evidently convinced that he has entered the service of a bloodthirsty demon. We ascend to the monument. Stop at the gate. Moon is rising. Heavy shadows. "Now, look out!" (from the bloodthirsty demon, in a loud, distinct voice). "If the ghost is here and I see him, so help me God I'll fire at him!" Suddenly, as we enter the field, a most extraordinary noise responds—terrific noise—human noise—and yet superhuman noise. B. T. D. brings piece to his shoulder. "Did you hear that, pa?" says Frank. "I did," says I. Noise repeated—portentous, derisive, dull, dismal, damnable. We advance towards the sound. Something white comes lumbering through the darkness. An asthmatic sheep. Dead, as I judge, by this time. Leaving Frank to guard him, I took Andrew with me, and went all around the monument, and down into the ditch, and examined the field well, thinking it likely that somebody might be taking advantage of the sheep to frighten the village.

Drama ends with discovery of no one, and triumphant return to rum-and-water. Ever affectionately.

To Sir John Bowring.

Gad's Hill, *Wednesday, Thirty-first October*, 1860.

My dear Sir John*—First let me congratulate you on your marriage and wish you all happiness and prosperity.

Secondly, I must tell you that I was greatly vexed with the Chatham people for not giving me early notice of your lecture. In that case I should (of course) have presided, as President of the Institution, and I should have asked you to honour my Falstaff house here. But when they made your kind intention known to me, I had made some important business engagements at the "All the Year Round" office for that evening, which I could not possibly forego. I charged them to tell you so, and was going to write to you when I found your kind letter.

We heard of your accident here, and of your "making nothing of it." I said that you didn't make much of disasters, and that you took poison (from natives) as quite a matter of course in the way of business.

Faithfully yours.

To Miss Hogarth.

Bideford, North Devon,
Thursday Night, First November, 1860.

My dearest Georgy—I write (with the most impracticable iron pen on earth) to report our safe arrival here, in a beastly hotel. We start to-morrow morning at nine on a two days' posting between this and Liskeard in Cornwall. We are due in Liskeard (but nobody seems to know anything about the roads) on Saturday afternoon, and we purpose making an excursion in that neighbourhood on Sunday, and coming up from Liskeard on Monday by Great Western fast train, which will get us to London, please God, in good time on Monday evening. There I shall hear from you, and know whether dear Mamie will move to London too.

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* Sir John Bowring, formerly her Majesty's Plenipotentiary in China and Governor of Hong Kong.—Ed.

We had a pleasant journey down here, and a beautiful day. No adventures whatever. Nothing has happened to Wilkie, and he sends love.

We had stinking fish for dinner, and have been able to drink nothing, though we have ordered wine, beer, and brandy-and-water. There is nothing in the house but two tarts and a pair of snuffers. The landlady is playing cribbage with the landlord in the next room (behind a thin partition), and they seem quite comfortable.—Ever, my dearest Georgy, Your most affectionate.

To Sir Austen Henry Layard.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Tuesday, Fourth December, 1860.

My dear Layard—I know you will readily believe that I would come if I could, and that I am heartily sorry I cannot.

A new story of my writing, nine months long, is just begun in "All the Year Round." A certain allotment of my time when I have that story-demand upon me, has, all through my author life, been an essential condition of my health and success. I have just returned here to work so many hours every day for so many days. It is really impossible for me to break my bond.

There is not a man in England who is more earnestly your friend and admirer than I am. The conviction that you know it, helps me out through this note. You are a man of so much mark to me, that I even regret your going into the House of Commons—for which assembly I have but a scant respect. But I would not mention it to the Southwark electors if I could come to-morrow; though I should venture to tell them (and even that your friends would consider very impolitic) that I think them very much honoured for having such a candidate for their suffrages.

My daughter and sister-in-law want to know what you have done with your "pledge" to come down here again. If they had votes for Southwark they would threaten to oppose you—but would never do it. I was solemnly sworn at breakfast to let you know that we should be delighted to see you. Bear witness that I kept my oath.—Ever, my dear Layard, Faithfully yours.

To Miss Mary Boyle.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Friday, Twenty-eighth December, 1860.

My dear Mary—I cannot tell you how much I thank you for the beautiful cigar-case, and how seasonable, and friendly, and good, and warm-hearted it looked when I opened it at Gad's Hill. Besides which, it is a cigar-case, and will hold cigars; two crowning merits that I never yet knew to be possessed by any article claiming the same name. For all of these reasons, but more than all because it comes from you, I love it, and send you eighteen hundred and sixty kisses, with one in for the new year.

I have no news, except that I am not quite well, and am being doctored. Pray read "Great Expectations." I think it is very droll. It is a very great success, and seems universally liked. I suppose because it opens funnily, and with an interest too.

I pass my time here (I am staying here alone) in working, taking physic, and taking a stall at a theatre every night. On Boxing Night I was at Covent Garden. A dull pantomime was "worked" (as we say) better than I ever saw a heavy piece worked on a first night, until suddenly and without a moment's warning, every scene on that immense stage fell over on its face, and disclosed chaos by gaslight behind! There never was such a business; about sixty people who were on the stage being extinguished in the most remarkable manner. Not a soul was hurt. In the uproar, some moon-calf rescued a porter pot, six feet high (out of which the clown had been drinking when the accident happened), and stood it on the cushion of the lowest proscenium box, P.S., beside a lady and gentleman, who were dreadfully ashamed of it. The moment the house knew that nobody was injured, they directed their whole attention to this gigantic porter pot in its genteel position (the lady and gentleman trying to hide behind it), and roared with laughter. When a modest footman came from behind the curtain to clear it, and took it up in his arms like a Brobdingnagian baby, we all laughed more than ever we had laughed in our lives. I don't know why.

We have had a fire here, but our people put it out before the parish-engine arrived, like a drivelling peram-

bulator, with *the beadle in it*, like an imbecile baby. Popular opinion, disappointed in the fire having been put out, snowballed the beadle. God bless it!

Over the way at the Lyceum, there is a very fair Christmas piece, with one or two uncommonly well-done nigger songs—one remarkably gay and mad, done in the finale to a scene. Also a very nice transformation, though I don't know what it means.

The poor actors waylay me in Bow Street to represent their necessities; and I often see one cut down a court when he beholds me coming, cut round Drury Lane to face me, and come up towards me near this door in the freshest and most accidental way, as if I was the last person he expected to see on the surface of this globe. The other day there thus appeared before me (simultaneously with a scent of rum in the air) one aged and greasy man, with a pair of pumps under his arm. He said he thought if he could get down to somewhere (I think it was Newcastle), he would get "taken on" as Pantaloon, the existing Pantaloon being "a stick, sir—a mere muff." I observed that I was sorry times were so bad with him. "Mr. Dickens, you know our profession, sir—no one knows it better, sir—there is no right feeling in it. I was Harlequin on your own circuit, sir, for five-and-thirty years, and was displaced by a boy, sir!—a boy!"

So no more at present, from, my dear Mary, your ever affectionate JOE.

PS.—DON'T I pine neither?

To M. de Cerjat.

OFFICE OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND,"
Friday, First February, 1861.

MY DEAR CERJAT—You have read in the papers of our heavy English frost. At Gad's Hill it was so intensely cold, that in our warm dining-room on Christmas Day we could hardly sit at the table. In my study on that morning, long after a great fire of coal and wood had been lighted, the thermometer was I don't know where below freezing. The bath froze, and all the pipes froze, and remained in a stony state for five or six weeks. The water in the bedroom jugs froze, and blew up the crockery.

The snow on the top of the house froze, and was imperfectly removed with axes. My beard froze as I walked about, and I couldn't detach my cravat and coat from it until I was thawed at the fire. My boys and half the officers stationed at Chatham skated away without a check to Gravesend—five miles off—and repeated the performance for three or four weeks. At last the thaw came, and then everything split, blew up, dripped, poured, perspired, and got spoilt. Since then we have had a small visitation of the plague of servants; the cook (in a riding-habit) and the groom (in a dress-coat and jewels) having mounted Mary's horse and mine, in our absence, and scoured the neighbouring country at a rattling pace. And when I went home last Saturday, I innocently wondered how the horses came to be out of condition, and gravely consulted the said groom on the subject, who gave it as his opinion "which they wanted reg'lar work." We are now coming to town until midsummer. Having sold my own house, to be more free and independent, I have taken a very pretty furnished house, No. 3 Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park. This, of course, on my daughter's account. For I have very good and cheerful bachelor rooms here, with an old servant in charge, who is the cleverest man of his kind in the world, and can do anything, from excellent carpentery to excellent cookery, and has been with me three-and-twenty years.

The American business is the greatest English sensation at present. I venture to predict that the struggle of violence will be a very short one, and will be soon succeeded by some new compact between the Northern and Southern States. Meantime the Lancashire mill-owners are getting very uneasy.

The Italian state of things is not regarded as looking very cheerful. What from one's natural sympathies with a people so oppressed as the Italians, and one's natural antagonism to a pope and a Bourbon (both of which superstitions I do suppose the world to have had more than enough of), I agree with you concerning Victor Emmanuel, and greatly fear that the Southern Italians are much degraded. Still, an united Italy would be of vast importance to the peace of the world, and would be a rock in Louis Napoleon's way, as he very well knows. There-

fore the idea must be championed, however much against hope.

My eldest boy, just home from China, was descried by Townshend's Henri the moment he landed at Marseilles, and was by him borne in triumph to Townshend's rooms. The weather was snowy, slushy, beastly; and Marseilles was, as it usually is to my thinking, well-nigh intolerable. My boy could not stay with Townshend, as he was coming on by express train; but he says: "I sat with him and saw him dine. He had a leg of lamb, and a tremendous cold." That is the whole description I have been able to extract from him.

This journal is doing gloriously, and "Great Expectations" is a great success. I have taken my third boy, Frank (Jeffrey's godson), into this office. If I am not mistaken, he has a natural literary taste and capacity, and may do very well with a chance so congenial to his mind, and being also entered at the Bar.

Dear me, when I have to show you about London, and we dine *en garçon* at odd places, I shall scarcely know where to begin. Only yesterday I walked out from here in the afternoon, and thought I would go down by the Houses of Parliament. When I got there, the day was so beautifully bright and warm, that I thought I would walk on by Millbank, to see the river. I walked straight on *for three miles* on a splendid broad esplanade overhanging the Thames, with immense factories, railway works, and what-not erected on it, and with the strangest beginnings and ends of wealthy streets pushing themselves into the very Thames. When I was a rower on that river, it was all broken ground and ditch, with here and there a public-house or two, an old mill, and a tall chimney. I had never seen it in any state of transition, though I suppose myself to know this rather large city as well as any one in it.

* * * * * *

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

3 Hanover Terrace, *Sunday, Twelfth May*, 1861.

My dear Bulwer Lytton—I received your revised proofs [of "A Strange Story"] only yesterday, and I sat down to read them last night. And before I say any-

thing further I may tell you that I COULD NOT lay them aside, but was obliged to go on with them in my bedroom until I got into a very ghostly state indeed. This morning I have taken them again and have gone through them with the utmost attention.

Of the beauty and power of the writing I say not a word, or of its originality and boldness, or of its quite extraordinary constructive skill. I confine myself solely to your misgiving, and to the question whether there is any sufficient foundation for it.

On the last head I say, without the faintest hesitation, most decidedly there is NOT sufficient foundation for it. I do not share it in the least. I believe that the readers who have never given their minds (or perhaps had any to give) to those strange psychological mysteries in ourselves, of which we are all more or less conscious, will accept your wonders as curious weapons in the armoury of fiction, and will submit ourselves to the Art with which said weapons are used. Even to that class of intelligence the marvellous addresses itself from a very strong position; and that class of intelligence is not accustomed to find the marvellous in such very powerful hands as yours. On more imaginative readers the tale will fall (or I am greatly mistaken) like a spell. By readers who combine some imagination, some scepticism, and some knowledge and learning, I hope it will be regarded as full of strange fancy and curious study, startling reflections of their own thoughts and speculations at odd times, and wonder which a master has a right to evoke. In the last point lies, to my thinking, the whole case. If you were the Magician's servant instead of the Magician, these potent spirits would get the better of you; but you *are* the Magician, and they don't, and you make them serve your purpose.

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To W. WILKIE COLLINS.

LORD WARDEN HOTEL, DOVER,
Friday Evening, Twenty-fourth May, 1861.

MY DEAR WILKIE—I am delighted to receive so good an account of last night, and have no doubt that it was a thorough success. Now it is over, I may honestly say

that I am glad you were (by your friendship) forced into the Innings, for there is no doubt that it is of immense importance to a public man in our way to have his wits at his tongue's end. Sir (as Dr. Johnson would have said), if it be not irrational in a man to count his feathered bipeds before they are hatched, we will conjointly astonish them next year. *Boswell:* Sir, I hardly understand you. *Johnson:* Sir, you never understand anything. *Boswell* (in a sprightly manner): Perhaps, sir, I am all the better for it. *Johnson* (savagely): Sir, I do not know but that you are. There is Lord Carlisle (smiling); he never understands anything, and yet the dog's well enough. Then, sir, there is Forster; he understands many things, and yet the fellow is fretful. Again, sir, there is Dickens, with a facile way with him—like Davy, sir, like Davy—yet I am told that the man is lying at a hedge ale-house by the sea-shore in Kent, as long as they will trust him. *Boswell:* But there are no hedges by the sea in Kent, sir. *Johnson:* And why not, sir? *Boswell* (at a loss): I don't know, sir, unless— *Johnson* (thundering): Let us have no unlesses, sir. If your father had never said "unless," he would have never begotten you, sir. *Boswell* (yielding): Sir, that is very true.

Of course I am dull and penitent here, but it is very beautiful. I can work well, and I walked, by the cliffs, to Folkestone and back to-day, when it was so exquisitely beautiful that, though I was alone, I could not keep silence on the subject. In the fourteen miles I doubt if I met twelve people. They say this house is full, yet I meet nobody, save now and then a languishing youth in a loose, very blue coat, lounging at the door and sucking the round head of a cane, as if he were trying the fit before he had it cut off from the stem as a pill, and swallowed it.

* * * * * *

To Lady Olliffe.

Lord Warden Hotel, Dover,
Sunday, Twenty-sixth May, 1861.

My dear Lady Olliffe—I have run away to this seabeach to get rid of my neuralgic face.

Touching the kind invitations received from you this

morning, I feel that the only course I can take—without being a Humbug—is to decline them. After the middle of June I shall be mostly at Gad's Hill—I know that I cannot do better than keep out of the way of hot rooms and late dinners, and what would you think of me, or call me, if I were to accept and not come!

No, no, no. Be still my soul. Be virtuous, eminent author. Do *not* accept, my Dickens. She is to come to Gad's Hill with her spouse. Await her there, my child. (Thus the voice of wisdom.)—My dear Lady Olliffe,

Ever affectionately yours.

To W. C. Macready.

"All the Year Round" Office,
Tuesday, Eleventh June, 1861.

My dearest Macready—There is little doubt, I think, of my reading at Cheltenham somewhere about November. I submit myself so entirely to Arthur Smith's arrangements for me, that I express my sentiments on this head with modesty. But I think there is scarcely a doubt of my seeing you then.

I have just finished my book of "Great Expectations," and am the worse for wear. Neuralgic pains in the face have troubled me a good deal, and the work has been pretty close. But I hope that the book is a good book, and I have no doubt of very soon throwing off the little damage it has done me.

What with Blondin at the Crystal Palace and Leotard at Leicester Square, we seem to be going back to barbaric excitements. I have not seen, and don't intend to see, the Hero of Niagara (as the posters call him), but I have been beguiled into seeing Leotard, and it is at once the most fearful and most graceful thing I have ever seen done.

I am sore afraid that the "Times," by playing fast and loose with the American question, has very seriously compromised this country. The Americans northward are perfectly furious on the subject; and Motley the historian (a very sensible man, strongly English in his sympathies) assured me the other day that he thought the harm done very serious indeed, and the dangerous

nature of the daily widening breach scarcely calculable.—
Ever most affectionately, My dearest Macready.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Sunday, Twenty-third June, 1861.

My dear Wilkie—We will arrange our Xmas No., please God, under the shade of the Oak Trees.

I shall remain in town on the Thursday, and will return with you on the Friday. We can settle our Train when we meet on Wednesday.

As yet, I have hardly got into the enjoyment of thorough laziness. Bulwer was so very anxious that I should alter the end of "Great Expectations"—the extreme end, I mean, after Biddy and Joe are done with—and stated his reasons so well, that I have resumed the wheel and taken another turn at it. Upon the whole, I think it is for the better. You shall see the change when we meet.

The country is most charming and this place very pretty. I am sorry to hear that the hot East winds have taken such a devastating blow into No. 12 Harley Street. They have been rather surprising, if anything in weather can be said to surprise.

I don't know whether anything remarkable comes off in the air to-day; but the blue-bottles (there are nine in this room) are all banging their heads against the window-glass in the most astonishing manner. I think there must be some competitive examination somewhere, and these nine have been rejected.

Ever affect'ly.

PS.—I reopen this to state that the most madly despondent blue-bottle has committed suicide, and fallen dead on the carpet.

To Mrs. Henry Austin.

Gad's Hill, *Sunday, Third November,* 1861.

EXTRACT

I am heartily glad to hear that you have been out in the air, and I hope you will go again very soon and make a point of continuing to go. There is a soothing influence in the sight of the earth and sky, which God put into

them for our relief when He made the world in which we are all to suffer, and strive, and die.

I will not fail to write to you from many points of my tour, and if you ever want to write to me you may be sure of a quick response, and may be certain that I am sympathetic and true. Ever affectionately.

To Miss Dickens.

Fountain Hotel, Canterbury,
Windy Night, Fourth November, 1861.

My dearest Mamie—A word of report before I go to bed. An excellent house to-night, and an audience positively perfect. The greatest part of it stalls, and an intelligent and delightful response in them, like the touch of a beautiful instrument. "Copperfield" wound up in a real burst of feeling and delight.

Ever affectionately.

To John Agate.

Lord Warden Hotel, Dover,
Wednesday, Sixth November, 1861.

Sir—I am exceedingly sorry to find, from the letter you have addressed to me, that you had just cause of complaint in being excluded from my reading here last night. It will now and then unfortunately happen when the place of reading is small (as in this case), that some confusion and inconvenience arise from the local agents over-estimating, in perfect good faith and sincerity, the capacity of the room. Such a mistake, I am assured, was made last night; and thus all the available space was filled before the people in charge were at all prepared for that circumstance.

You may readily suppose that I can have no personal knowledge of the proceedings of the people in my employment at such a time. But I wish to assure you very earnestly, that they are all old servants, well acquainted with my principles and wishes, and that they are under the strongest injunction to avoid any approach to mercenary dealing; and to behave to all comers equally with as much consideration and politeness as they know I should myself display. The recent death of a much-

regretted friend of mine, who managed this business for me, and on whom these men were accustomed to rely in any little difficulty, caused them (I have no doubt) to feel rather at a loss in your case. Do me the favour to understand that under any other circumstances you would, as a matter of course, have been provided with any places whatever that could be found, without the smallest reference to what you had originally paid. This is scanty satisfaction to you, but it is so strictly the truth, that yours is the first complaint of the kind I have ever received.

I hope to read in Dover again, but it is quite impossible that I can make any personal arrangement for that purpose. Whenever I may return here, you may be sure I shall not fail to remember that I owe you a recompense for a disappointment. In the meanwhile I very sincerely regret it.* Faithfully yours.

To Miss Hogarth.

Bedford Hotel, Brighton,
Thursday, Seventh November, 1861.

My Dear Georgy—

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The Duchess of Cambridge comes to-night to "Copperfield." The bad weather has not in the least touched us.

The storm was most magnificent at Dover. All the great side of the Lord Warden next the sea had to be emptied, the break of the sea was so prodigious, and the noise was so utterly confounding. The sea came in like a great sky of immense clouds, for ever breaking suddenly into furious rain. All kinds of wreck were washed in. Miss Birmingham and I saw, among other things, a very pretty brass-bound chest being thrown about like a feather. On Tuesday night, the unhappy Ostend packet could not get in, neither could she go back, and she beat about the Channel until noon yesterday. I saw her come in then, *with five men at the wheel;* such a picture of misery, as

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* In reference to this letter, Mr. John Agate, of Dover, wrote: "There are few public men with the strain upon their time and energies which he had particularly (and which I know better now that I have read his life), who would have spared the time to have written such a long courteous letter."—Ed.

to the crew (of passengers there were no signs), as you can scarcely imagine.

To Miss Hogarth.

Torquay, *Wednesday, Eighth January,* 1862.

My dearest Georgy—You know, I think, that I was very averse to going to Plymouth, and would not have gone there again but for poor Arthur.* But on the last night I read "Copperfield," and positively enthralled the people. It was a most overpowering effect, and poor Andrew† came behind the screen, after the storm, and cried in the best and manliest manner. Also there were two or three lines of his shipmates and other sailors, and they were extraordinarily affected. But its culminating effect was on Macready at Cheltenham. When I got home after "Copperfield" I found him quite unable to speak, and able to do nothing but square his dear old jaw all on one side, and roll his eyes (half closed), like Jackson's picture of him. And when I said something light about it, he returned: "No—er—Dickens! I swear to Heaven that, as a piece of passion and playfulness—er—indescribably mixed up together, it does—er—no, really, Dickens!—amaze me as profoundly as it moves me. But as a piece of art—and you know—er—that I—no, Dickens! By ——! have seen the best art in a great time—it is incomprehensible to me. How is it got at—er—how is it done—er—how one man can—well? It lays me on my—er—back, and it is of no use talking about it!" With which he put his hand upon my breast and pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, and I felt as if I were doing somebody to his Werner. Katie, by the bye, is a wonderful audience, and has a great fund of wild feeling in her. Johnny not at all unlike Plorn.

I have not yet seen the room here, but imagine it to be very small. Exeter I know, and that is small also. I am very much used up, on the whole, for I cannot bear this moist warm climate. It would kill me very soon. And I have now got to the point of taking so much out of myself with "Copperfield," that I might as well do Richard Wardour.

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* Arthur Smith, lately dead.—Ed.

† Lieutenant Andrew Gordon, R.N.—Ed.

You have now, my dearest Georgy, the fullest extent of my tidings. This is a very pretty place—a compound of Hastings, Tunbridge Wells, and little bits of the hills about Naples; but I met four respirators as I came up from the station, and three pale curates without them, who seemed in a bad way.

Ever your affectionate.

To M. de Cerjat.

16 Hyde Park Gate, South Kensington Gore,
Sunday, Sixteenth March, 1862.

My dear Cerjat—My daughter naturally liking to be in town at this time of year, I have changed houses with a friend for three months.

My eldest boy is in business as an Eastern merchant in the City, and will do well if he can find continuous energy; otherwise not. My second boy is with the 42nd Highlanders in India. My third boy, a good steady fellow, is educating expressly for engineers or artillery. My fourth (this sounds like a charade), a born little sailor, is a midshipman in H.M.S. *Orlando*, now at Bermuda, and will make his way anywhere. Remaining two at school, elder of said remaining two very bright and clever. Georgina and Mary keeping house for me; and Francis Jeffrey (I ought to have counted him as the third boy, so we'll take him in here as number two and a half) in my office at present. Now you have the family bill of fare.

You ask me about Fechter and his Hamlet. It was a performance of extraordinary merit; by far the most coherent, consistent, and intelligible Hamlet I ever saw. Some of the delicacies with which he rendered his conception clear were extremely subtle; and in particular he avoided that brutality towards Ophelia which, with a greater or less amount of coarseness, I have seen in all other Hamlets. As a mere *tour de force* it would have been very remarkable in its disclosure of a perfectly wonderful knowledge of the force of the English language; but its merit was far beyond and above this. Foreign accent, of course, but not at all a disagreeable one. And he was so obviously safe and at ease, that you were never in pain for him as a foreigner. Add to this a perfectly picturesque and romantic "make-up," and a remorse-

less destruction of all conventionalities, and you have the leading virtues of the impersonation. In Othello he did not succeed. In Iago he is very good. He is an admirable artist, and far beyond any one on our stage. A real artist and a gentleman.

Last Thursday I began reading again in London—a condensation of "Copperfield," and "Mr. Bob Sawyer's Party," from "Pickwick," to finish merrily. The success of "Copperfield" is astounding. It made an impression that *I* must not describe. I may only remark that I was half dead when I had done; and that although I had looked forward, all through the summer, when I was carefully getting it up, to its being a London sensation; and that although Macready, hearing it at Cheltenham, told me to be prepared for a great effect, it even went beyond my hopes. I read again next Thursday, and the rush for places is quite furious. Tell Townshend this with my love, if you see him before I have time to write to him; and tell him that I thought the people would never let me go away, they became so excited, and showed it so very warmly. I am trying to plan out a new book, but have not got beyond trying.

Yours affectionately.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

No. 26 Wellington Street, Strand, London, W.C.,
Wednesday, Eighth October, 1862.

My dear Wilkie—I am really quite concerned that you should have bothered your sufficiently occupied mind about the Xmas No. Of course it seems very strange and bare to me not to have you in it; but I never seriously contemplated the reasonable likelihood of your being able to do anything for it.

It is a great pleasure to me that you like the notion (and execution) so well. . . .

I have done a little story for "His Boots," very slight in itself, but into which I have tried to infuse (fancifully) every conceivable feature of an old fortified French town. It is very like, I think. When I have the proof I will send it you to read at any odd times. I think I shall now go at some short odd comic notion, to supply your place.

I am bent upon making a good No. to go with "No Name." . . .

Macready was with us from last Saturday to Monday. Very little altered indeed—and with not the end of one single sentence within four hundred and fifty miles of him.

Of course I will report myself in Paris before we have been there many days (we start on Sunday week), and give you my address as soon as I have such a thing to my back. I am not going to have any establishment there, but intend the dinner to be brought in on a man's shoulders (you know the tray) from a Restaurant.

I saw Poole (for my sins) last Saturday, and he *was* a sight. He had got out of bed to receive me (at three P.M.) and tried to look as if he had been up at Dawn—with a dirty and obviously warm impression of himself on the bedclothes. It was a tent bedstead with four wholly unaccounted for and bare poles, each with an immense spike on the top, like four Lightning conductors. He had a fortnight's grey beard, and had made a lot of the most extraordinary memoranda of questions to ask me—which he couldn't read—through an eyeglass which he couldn't hold. He was continually beset with a notion that his landlady was listening outside the door, and was continually getting up from a kind of ironing-board at which he sat, with the intention of darting at the door, but invariably missed his aim, and brought himself up by the forehead against blind corners of the wall. He had a dressing-gown over his night-shirt, and wore his trousers where Blondin wears his Baskets. He said, with the greatest indignation, I might suppose what sort of "society" he could get out of his landlady, when he mentioned that she could say nothing, on being consulted by him touching the Poison-case at the Old Bailey, but "People didn't ought to poison people, sir; it's wrong."

Ever affec'ly.

To Mrs. Henry Austin.

Paris, Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, 27,
Friday, Seventh November, 1862.

My dear Letitia—Your improved account of yourself is very cheering and hopeful. Through determined occupation and action, lies the way. Be sure of it.

I came over to France before Georgina and Mary, and went to Boulogne to meet them coming in by the steamer on the great Sunday—the day of the storm. I stood (holding on with both hands) on the pier at Boulogne, five hours. The Sub-Marine Telegraph had telegraphed their boat as having come out of Folkestone—though the companion boat from Boulogne didn't try it—and at nine o'clock at night, she being due at six, there were no signs of her. My principal dread was, that she would try to get into Boulogne; which she could not possibly have done without carrying away everything on deck. The tide at nine o'clock being too low for any such desperate attempt, I thought it likely that they had run for the Downs and would knock about there all night. So I went to the Inn to dry my pea-jacket and get some dinner anxiously enough, when, at about ten, came a telegram from them at Calais to say they had run in there. To Calais I went, post, next morning, expecting to find them half-dead (of course they had arrived half-drowned), but I found them elaborately got up to come to Paris by the next train, and the most wonderful thing of all was, that they hardly seemed to have been frightened! Of course, they had discovered at the end of the voyage, that a young bride and her husband, the only other passengers on deck, and with whom they had been talking all the time, were an officer from Chatham whom they knew very well (when dry), just married and going to India! So they all set up housekeeping together at Dessin's at Calais (where I am well known), and looked as if they had been passing a mild summer there.

We have a pretty apartment here, but house-rent is awful to mention. Mrs. Bouncer* (muzzled by the Parisian police) is also here, and is a wonderful spectacle to behold in the streets, restrained like a raging Lion.

I learn from our embassy here, that the Emperor has just made an earnest proposal to our Government to unite with France (and Russia, if Russia will) in an appeal to America to stop the brutal war. Our Government's answer is not yet received, but I think I clearly perceive that the proposal will be declined, on the ground "that the time has not yet come." Ever affectionately.

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* Mamie Dickens's little white Pomeranian dog.—Ed.

To Charles Fechter.

Paris, *Saturday, Sixth December*, 1862.

My dear Fechter—I have read "The White Rose" attentively, and think it an extremely good play. It is vigorously written with a great knowledge of the stage, and presents many striking situations. I think the close particularly fine, impressive, bold, and new.

But I greatly doubt the expediency of your doing *any* historical play early in your management. By the words "historical play," I mean a play founded on any incident in English history. Our public are accustomed to associate historical plays with Shakespeare. In any other hands, I believe they care very little for crowns and dukedoms. What you want is something with an interest of a more domestic and general nature—an interest as romantic as you please, but having a more general and wider response than a disputed succession to the throne can have for Englishmen at this time of day. Such interest culminated in the last Stuart, and has worn itself out. It would be uphill work to evoke an interest in Perkin Warbeck.

I do not doubt the play's being well received, but my fear is that these people would be looked upon as mere abstractions, and would have but a cold welcome in consequence, and would not lay hold of your audience. Now, when you *have* laid hold of your audience and have accustomed them to your theatre, you may produce "The White Rose," with far greater justice to the author, and to the manager also. Wait. Feel your way. Perkin Warbeck is too far removed from analogy with the sympathies and lives of the people for a beginning.—My dear Fechter, Ever faithfully yours.

To Miss Dickens.

Hôtel du Helder, Paris,
Sunday, First February, 1863.

My dearest Mamie—I cannot give you any idea of the success of the readings here, because no one can imagine the scene of last Friday night at the Embassy. Such

audiences and such enthusiasm I have never seen, but the thing culminated on Friday night in a two-hours' storm of excitement and pleasure. They actually recommenced and applauded right away into their carriages and down the street.

You know your parent's horror of being lionised, and will not be surprised to hear that I am half dead of it. I cannot leave here until Thursday (though I am every hour in danger of running away) because I have to dine out, to say nothing of breakfasting—think of me breakfasting!—every intervening day. But my project is to send John home on Thursday, and then to go on a little perfectly quiet tour for about ten days, touching the sea at Boulogne.

I enclose a short note for each of the little boys. Give Harry ten shillings pocket-money, and Plorn six.

The Olliffe girls, very nice. Florence at the readings, prodigiously excited.

To Miss Hogarth.

Paris, *Sunday, First February*, 1863.

From my hurried note to Mamie, you will get some faint general idea of a new star's having arisen in Paris. But of its brightness you can have no adequate conception.

(John has locked me up and gone out, and the little bell at the door is ringing demoniacally while I write.)

You have never heard me read yet. I have been twice goaded and lifted out of myself into a state that astonished *me* almost as much as the audience. "I have a cold, but no neuralgia, and am as well as can be expected."

I forgot to tell Mamie that I went (with Lady Molesworth) to hear "Faust" last night. It is a splendid work, and perfectly delighted me. But I think it requires too much of the audience to do for a London opera house. The composer must be a very remarkable man indeed. Some management of light throughout the story is also very poetical and fine. We had Carvalho's box. I could hardly bear the thing, it affected me so.

But, as a certain Frenchman said, "No weakness, Danton!" So I leave off.

Ever affectionately.

To W. C. Macready.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Thursday, Nineteenth February, 1863.

My dearest Macready—I have just come back from Paris, where the readings—"Copperfield," "Dombey" and "Trial," and "Carol" and "Trial"—have made a sensation which modesty (my natural modesty) renders it impossible for me to describe. You know what a noble audience the Paris audience is! They were at their very noblest with me.

I was very much concerned by hearing hurriedly from Georgy that you were ill. But when I came home at night, she showed me Katie's letter, and that set me up again. Ah, you have the best of companions and nurses, and can afford to be ill now and then for the happiness of being so brought through it. But don't do it again yet awhile for all that.

Régnier desired to be warmly remembered to you. He looks just as of yore.

Paris generally is about as wicked and extravagant as in the days of the Regency. Madame Viardot in the "Orphée," most splendid. An opera of "Faust," a very sad and noble rendering of that sad and noble story. Stage management remarkable for some admirable, and really poetical, effects of light. In the more striking situations, Mephistopheles surrounded by an infernal red atmosphere of his own. Marguerite by a pale blue mournful light. The two never blending. After Marguerite has taken the jewels placed in her way in the garden, a weird evening draws on, and the bloom fades from the flowers, and the leaves of the trees droop and lose their fresh green, and mournful shadows overhang her chamber window, which was innocently bright and gay at first. I couldn't bear it, and gave in completely.

Fechter doing wonders over the way here, with a picturesque French drama. Miss Kate Terry, in a small part in it, perfectly charming. You may remember her making a noise, years ago, doing a boy at an inn, in "The Courier of Lyons"? She has a tender love-scene in this piece, which is a really beautiful and artistic thing. I saw her do it at about three in the morning of the day

when the theatre opened, surrounded by shavings and carpenters, and (of course) with that inevitable hammer going; and I told Fechter: "That is the very best piece of womanly tenderness I have ever seen on the stage, and you'll find that no audience can miss it." It is a comfort to add that it was instantly seized upon, and is much talked of.

Stanfield was very ill for some months, then suddenly picked up, and is really rosy and jovial again. Going to see him when he was very despondent, I told him the story of Fechter's piece (then in rehearsal) with appropriate action; fighting a duel with the washing-stand, defying the bedstead, and saving the life of the sofa-cushion. This so kindled his old theatrical ardour, that I think he turned the corner on the spot.

With love to Mrs. Macready and Katie, and (be still my heart!) Benvenuta, and the exiled Johnny (not too attentive at school, I hope?), and the personally-unknown young Parr, ever, my dearest Macready,

Your most affectionate.

To Mrs. F. Lehmann.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
No. 26 Wellington Street, Strand, London, W.C.,
Tuesday, Tenth March, 1863.

Dear Mrs. Lehmann—Two stalls for to-morrow's reading were sent to you by post before I heard from you this morning. Two will always come to you while you remain a Gummidge, and I hope I need not say that if you want more, none could be better bestowed in my sight.

Pray tell Lehmann, when you next write to him, that I find I owe him a mint of money for the delightful Swedish sleigh-bells. They are the wonder, awe, and admiration of the whole country-side, and I never go out without them.

Let us make an exchange of child stories. I heard of a little fellow the other day whose mamma had been telling him that a French governess was coming over to him from Paris, and had been expatiating on the blessings and advantages of having foreign tongues. After

leaning his plump little cheek against the window glass in a dreary little way for some minutes, he looked round and enquired in a general way, and not as if it had any special application, whether she didn't think "that the Tower of Babel was a great mistake altogether"?

Ever faithfully yours.

To W. C. Macready.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Thursday, Thirty-first March, 1863.

My dearest Macready—I mean to go on reading into June. For the sake of the finer effects (in "Copperfield" principally), I have changed from St. James's Hall to the Hanover Square Room. The latter is quite a wonderful room for sound, and so easy that the least inflection will tell anywhere in the place exactly as it leaves your lips; but I miss my dear old shilling galleries—six or eight hundred strong—with a certain roaring sea of response in them, that you have stood upon the beach of many and many a time.

The summer, I hope and trust, will quicken the pace at which you grow stronger again. I am but in dull spirits myself just now, or I should remonstrate with you on your slowness.

Having two little boys sent home from school "to see the illuminations" on the marriage-night, I chartered an enormous van, at a cost of five pounds, and we started in majesty from the office in London, fourteen strong. We crossed Waterloo Bridge with the happy design of beginning the sight at London Bridge, and working our way through the City to Regent Street. In a by-street in the Borough, over against a dead wall and under a railway bridge, we were blocked for four hours. We were obliged to walk home at last, having seen nothing whatever. The wretched van turned up in the course of the next morning; and the best of it was that at Rochester here they illuminated the fine old castle, and really made a very splendid and picturesque thing (so my neighbours tell me).—Ever, my dearest Macready,

Your most affectionate.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Wednesday, Twenty-second April, 1863.

EXTRACT*

Ah, poor Egg! I knew what you would think and feel about it. When we saw him in Paris on his way out I was struck by his extreme nervousness, and derived from it an uneasy foreboding of his state. What a large piece of a good many years he seems to have taken with him! How often have I thought, since the news of his death came, of his putting his part in the saucepan (with the cover on) when we rehearsed "The Lighthouse"; of his falling out of the hammock when we rehearsed "The Frozen Deep"; of his learning Italian numbers when he ate the garlic in the carriage; of the thousands (I was going to say) of dark mornings when I apostrophised him as "Kernel"; of his losing my invaluable knife in that beastly stage-coach; of his posting up that mysterious book† every night! I hardly know why, but I have always associated that volume most with Venice. In my memory of the dear gentle little fellow, he will be (as since those days he always has been) eternally posting up that book at the large table in the middle of our Venice sitting-room, incidentally asking the name of an hotel three weeks back! And his pretty house is to be laid waste and sold. If there be a sale on the spot I shall try to buy something in loving remembrance of him, good dear little fellow. Think what a great "Frozen Deep" lay close under those boards we acted on! My brother Alfred, Luard, Arthur, Albert, Austin, Egg. Even among the audience Prince Albert and poor Stone! "I heard the" —I forget what it was I used to say—"come up from the great deep"; and it rings in my ears now, like a sort of mad prophecy.

However, this won't do. We must close up the ranks and march on.

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* On the death of Mr. Egg.—Ed.
† His travelling journal.—Ed.

To M. de Cerjat.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Thursday, Twenty-fourth May, 1863.

My dear Cerjat—I don't wonder at your finding it difficult to reconcile your mind to a French Hamlet; but I assure you that Fechter's is a very remarkable performance, perfectly consistent with itself (whether it be my particular Hamlet, or your particular Hamlet, or no), a coherent and intelligent whole, and done by a true artist. I have never seen, I think, an intelligent and clear view of the whole character so well sustained throughout; and there is a very captivating air of romance and picturesqueness added, which is quite new. Rely upon it, the public were right. The thing could not have been sustained by oddity; it would have perished upon that, very soon. As to the mere accent, there is far less drawback in that than you would suppose. For this reason, he obviously knows English so thoroughly that you feel he is safe. You are never in pain for him. This sense of ease is gained directly, and then you think very little more about it.

The Colenso and Jowett matter is a more difficult question, but here again I don't go with you. The position of the writers of "Essays and Reviews" is, that certain parts of the Old Testament have done their intended function in the education of the world *as it was;* but that mankind, like the individual man, is designed by the Almighty to have an infancy and a maturity, and that as it advances, the machinery of its education must advance too. For example: inasmuch as ever since there was a sun and there was vapour, there *must have* been a rainbow under certain conditions, so surely it would be better now to recognise that indisputable fact. Similarly, Joshua might command the sun to stand still, under the impression that it moved round the earth; but he could not possibly have inverted the relations of the earth and the sun, whatever his impressions were. Again, it is contended that the science of geology is quite as much a revelation to man, as books of an immense age and of (at the best) doubtful origin, and that your consideration of the latter must reasonably be influenced by

the former. As I understand the importance of timely suggestions such as these, it is, that the Church should not gradually shock and lose the more thoughtful and logical of human minds; but should be so gently and considerately yielding as to retain them, and, through them, hundreds of thousands. This seems to me, as I understand the temper and tendency of the time, whether for good or evil, to be a very wise and necessary position. And as I understand the danger, it is not chargeable on those who take this ground, but on those who in reply call names and argue nothing. What these bishops and such-like say about revelation, in assuming it to be finished and done with, I can't in the least understand. Nothing is discovered without God's intention and assistance, and I suppose every new knowledge of His works that is conceded to man to be distinctly a revelation by which men are to guide themselves. Lastly, in the mere matter of religious doctrine and dogmas, these men (Protestants—protestors—successors of the men who protested against human judgment being set aside) talk and write as if they were all settled by the direct act of Heaven; not as if they had been, as we know they were, a matter of temporary accommodation and adjustment among disputing mortals as fallible as you or I.

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To a Jewish Lady.

Friday, Tenth July, 1863.*

Dear Madam—I hope you will excuse this tardy reply to your letter. It is often impossible for me, by any means, to keep pace with my correspondents. I must take leave to say, that if there be any general feeling on the part of the intelligent Jewish people, that I have done them what you describe as "a great wrong," they are a far less sensible, a far less just, and a far less good-tempered people than I have always supposed them to be. Fagin, in "Oliver Twist," is a Jew, because it unfortunately was true of the time to which that story

* Answer to letter from Jewish lady, remonstrating with him on injustice to the Jews, shown in the character of Fagin, and asking for a subscription for the benefit of the Jewish poor.—Ed.

refers, that that class of criminal almost invariably was a Jew. But surely no sensible man or woman of your persuasion can fail to observe—firstly, that all the rest of the wicked *dramatis personæ* are Christians; and secondly, that he is called a "Jew" not because of his religion, but because of his race. If I were to write a story, in which I described a Frenchman or a Spaniard as "the Roman Catholic," I should do a very indecent and unjustifiable thing; but I make mention of Fagin as the Jew, because he is one of the Jewish people, and because it conveys that kind of idea of him which I should give my readers of a Chinaman, by calling him a Chinese.

The enclosed is quite a nominal subscription towards the good object in which you are interested; but I hope it may serve to show you that I have no feeling towards the Jewish people but a friendly one. I always speak well of them, whether in public or in private, and bear my testimony (as I ought to do) to their perfect good faith in such transactions as I have ever had with them; and in my "Child's History of England," I have lost no opportunity of setting forth their cruel persecution in old times.—Dear Madam, Faithfully yours.*

To John Bennett.†

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Monday Night, Fourteenth September, 1863.

My dear Sir—Since my hall clock was sent to your establishment to be cleaned it has gone (as indeed it always has) perfectly well, but has struck the hours with great reluctance, and after enduring internal agonies of a most distressing nature, it has now ceased striking altogether. Though a happy release for the clock, this is not convenient to the household. If you can send down

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* In reply to this, the Jewish lady thanked him for his kind letter and its enclosure, still remonstrating and pointing out that though, as he observed, "all the other criminal characters were Christians, they are, at least, contrasted with characters of good Christians; this wretched Fagin stands alone as the Jew." The reply to *this* letter afterwards was the character of Riah, in "Our Mutual Friend," and some favourable sketches of Jewish character in the lower class, in some articles in "All the Year Round."—Ed.

† Afterwards Sir John Bennett.—Ed.

any confidential person with whom the clock can confer, I think it may have something on its works that it would be glad to make a clean breast of. Faithfully yours.

To Charles Reade.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Wednesday, Thirtieth September, 1863.

My dear Reade—I *must* write you one line to say how interested I am in your story,* and to congratulate you upon its admirable art and its surprising grace and vigour.

And to hint my hope, at the same time, that you will be able to find leisure for a little dash for the Christmas number. It would be a really great and true pleasure to me if you could. Faithfully yours always.

To W. H. Wills.

Gad's Hill, *Sunday, Twentieth December*, 1863.

My dear Wills—I am clear that you took my cold. Why didn't you do the thing completely, and take it away from me? for it hangs by me still.

Will you tell Mrs. Linton that in looking over her admirable account (*most* admirable) of Mrs. Gordon's book, I have taken out the references to Lockhart, not because I in the least doubt their justice, but because I knew him and he liked me; and because one bright day in Rome, I walked about with him for some hours when he was dying fast, and all the old faults had faded out of him, and the now ghost of the handsome man I had first known when Scott's daughter was at the head of his house, had little more to do with this world than she in her grave, or Scott in his, or small Hugh Littlejohn in his. Lockhart had been anxious to see me all the previous day (when I was away on the Campagna), and as we walked about I knew very well that *he* knew very well why. He talked of getting better, but I never saw him again. This makes me stay Mrs. Linton's hand, gentle as it is.

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* "Hard Cash," appearing in "All the Year Round." Dickens highly regarded Reade both as a writer and a friend.—Ed.

Mrs. Lirriper is indeed a most brilliant old lady. God bless her! Ever faithfully.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Gad's Hill, *Monday, Twenty-fourth January*, 1864.

EXTRACT.

My dear Wilkie—I am horribly behindhand in answering your welcome letter; but I have been so busy, and have had the house so full for Christmas and the New Year, and have had so much to see to in getting Frank out to India, that I have not been able to settle down to a regular long letter, which I mean this to be, but which it may not turn out to be, after all.

First, I will answer your enquiries about the Christmas number and the new book. The Christmas number has been the greatest success of all; has shot ahead of last year; has sold about two hundred and twenty thousand; and has made the name of Mrs. Lirriper so swiftly and domestically famous as never was. I had a very strong belief in her when I wrote about her, finding that she made a great effect upon me; but she certainly has gone beyond my hopes. (Probably you know nothing about her? which is a very unpleasant consideration.) Of the new book, I have done the two first numbers, and am now beginning the third. It is a combination of drollery with romance which requires a great deal of pains and a perfect throwing away of points that might be amplified; but I hope it is *very good*. I confess, in short, that I think it is. Strange to say, I felt at first quite dazed in getting back to the large canvas and the big brushes; and even now, I have a sensation as of acting at the San Carlo after Tavistock House, which I could hardly have supposed would have come upon so old a stager.

You will have read about poor Thackeray's death—sudden, and yet not sudden, for he had long been alarmingly ill. At the solicitation of Mr. Smith and some of his friends, I have done what I would most gladly have excused myself from doing, if I felt I could—written a couple of pages about him in what was his own magazine.

Concerning the Italian experiment, De la Rue is more

hopeful than you. He and his bank are closely leagued with the powers at Turin, and he has long been devoted to Cavour; but he gave me the strongest assurances (with illustrations) of the fusion between place and place, and of the blending of small mutually antagonistic characters into one national character, progressing cheeringly and certainly. Of course there must be discouragements and discrepancies in the first struggles of a country previously so degraded and enslaved, and the time, as yet, has been very short.

I should like to have a day with you at the Coliseum, and on the Appian Way, and among the tombs, and with the Orvieto. But Rome and I are wide asunder, physically as well as morally. I wonder whether the dramatic stable, where we saw the marionettes, still receives the Roman public? And Lord! when I think of you in that hotel, how I think of poor dear Egg in the long front drawing-room, giving on to the piazza, posting up that wonderful necromantic volume which we never shall see opened!

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To Marcus Stone.

57 Gloucester Place, Hyde Park,
Tuesday, Twenty-third February, 1864.

My dear Marcus—I think the design for the cover *excellent*, and do not doubt its coming out to perfection. The slight alteration I am going to suggest originates in a business consideration not to be overlooked.

The word "Our" in the title must be out in the open like "Mutual Friend," making the title three distinct large lines—"Our" as big as "Mutual Friend." This would give you too much design at the bottom. I would therefore take out the dustman, and put the Wegg and Boffin composition (which is capital) in its place. I don't want Mr. Inspector or the murder reward bill, because these points are sufficiently indicated in the river at the top. Therefore you can have an indication of the dustman in Mr. Inspector's place. Note, that the dustman's face should be droll, and not horrible. Twemlow's elbow will still go out of the frame as it does now, and the same

with Lizzie's skirts on the opposite side. With these changes, work away!

Mrs. Boffin, as I judge of her from the sketch, "very good, indeed." I want Boffin's oddity, without being at all blinked, to be an oddity of a very honest kind, that people will like.

The doll's dressmaker is immensely better than she was. I think she should now come extremely well. A weird sharpness not without beauty is the thing I want.

Affectionately yours.

To Charles Knight.

57 Gloucester Place, W.,
Tuesday, First March, 1864.

My dear Knight—We knew of your being in the Isle of Wight, and had said that we should have this year to drink your health in your absence. Rely on my being always ready and happy to renew our old friendship in the flesh. In the spirit it needs no renewal, because it has no break.

Ah poor Mrs. White! A sad, sad story! * It is better for poor White that that little churchyard by the sea received his ashes a while ago, than that he should have lived to this time.

My poor boy † was on his way home from an up-country station, on sick leave. He had been very ill, but was not so at the time. He was talking to some brother officers in the Calcutta hospital about his preparations for home, when he suddenly became excited, had a rush of blood from the mouth, and was dead. His brother Frank would arrive out at Calcutta, expecting to see him after six years, and he would have been dead a month.

My "working life" is resolving itself at the present into another book, in twenty green leaves. You work like a Trojan at Ventnor, but you do that everywhere; and that's why you are so young. Affectionately yours.

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* The death of her last surviving daughter.—Ed.

† Walter Landor Dickens, lieutenant in the 42nd Royal Highlanders, died on the thirty-first December, 1863, aged 23.—Ed.

To Mrs. Storrar.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Sunday Morning, Fifteenth May, 1864.

My dear Mrs. Storrar—Our family dinner must come off at Gad's Hill, where I have improvements to exhibit, and where I shall be truly pleased to see you and the doctor again. I have deferred answering your note, while I have been scheming and scheming for a day between this time and our departure. But it is all in vain. My engagements have accumulated, and become such a whirl that no day is left me. Nothing is left me but to get away. I look forward to my release from this dining life with an inexpressible longing after quiet and my own pursuits. What with public speechifying, private eating and drinking, and perpetual simmering in hot rooms, I have made London too hot to hold me and my work together. Mary and Georgina acknowledge the condition of imbecility to which we have become reduced in reference to your kind reminder. They say, when I stare at them in a forlorn way with your note in my hand: "What can you do!" To which I can only reply, implicating them: "See what you have brought me to!"

With our united kind regards to yourself and Dr. Storrar, I entreat your pity and compassion for an unfortunate wretch whom a too-confiding disposition has brought to this pass. If I had not allowed my "cheeild" to pledge me to all manner of fellow-creatures, I and my digestion might have been in a state of honourable independence this day. Faithfully and penitently yours.

To W. C. Macready.

16 Somers Place, Hyde Park,
Saturday Night, Twenty-second April, 1865.

My dearest Macready—A thousand thanks for your kind letter, most heartily welcome.

My frost-bitten foot, after causing me great inconvenience and much pain, has begun to conduct itself amiably. I can now again walk my ten miles in the morning without inconvenience, but am absurdly obliged to sit shoeless all the evening—a very slight penalty,

as I detest going out to dinner (which killed the original old Parr by the bye).

I am working like a dragon at my book, and am a terror to the household, likewise to all the organs and brass bands in this quarter. Gad's Hill is being gorgeously painted, and we are here until the First of June. I wish I might hope you would be there any time this summer; I really *have* made the place comfortable and pretty by this time.

It is delightful to us to hear such good news of Butty.* She made so deep an impression on Fechter that he always asks me what Ceylon has done for her, and always beams when I tell him how thoroughly well it has made her. As to *you,* you are the youngest man (worth mentioning as a thorough man) that I know. Oh, let me be as young when I am as——did you think I was going to write "old"? No, sir—withdraw from the wear and tear of busy life is my expression.

Poole still holds out at Kentish Town, and says he is dying of solitude. His memory is astoundingly good. I see him about once in two or three months, and in the meantime he makes notes of questions to ask me when I come. Having fallen in arrear of the time, these generally refer to unknown words he has encountered in the newspapers. His three last (he always reads them with tremendous difficulty through an enormous magnifying-glass) were as follows:

1. What's croquet?
2. What's an Albert chain?
3. Let me know the state of mind of the Queen.

When I had delivered a neat exposition on these heads, he turned back to his memoranda, and came to something that the utmost power of the enormous magnifying-glass couldn't render legible. After a quarter of an hour or so, he said: "Oh yes, I know." And then rose and clasped his hands above his head, and said: "Thank God, I am not a dram-drinker."

Do think of coming to Gad's in the summer; and do give my love to Mrs. Macready, and tell her I know she can make you come if she will. Johnny we suppose to be climbing the tree of knowledge somewhere.—My dearest Macready, Ever yours most affectionately.

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* Macready's youngest daughter, Benvenuta.—Ed.

To Percy Fitzgerald.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Friday, Seventh July, 1865.

My dear Fitzgerald—I shall be delighted to see you at Gad's Hill on Sunday, and I hope you will bring a bag with you and will not think of returning to London at night.

We are a small party just now, for my daughter Mary has been decoyed to Andover for the election week, in the Conservative interest; think of my feelings as a Radical parent! The wrong-headed member and his wife are the friends with whom she hunts, and she helps to receive (and *de*ceive) the voters, which is very awful!

But in the week after next we shall be in great croquet force. I shall hope to persuade you to come back to us then for a few days, and we will try to make you some amends for a dull Sunday. Turn it over in your mind and try to manage it. Sincerely yours ever.

To Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Thursday, Twentieth July, 1865.

My dear Bulwer Lytton—I am truly sorry to reply to your kind and welcome note that we cannot come to Knebworth on a visit at this time: firstly, because I am tied by the leg to my book. Secondly, because my married daughter and her husband are with us. Thirdly, because my two boys are at home for their holidays.

But if you would come out of that murky electioneering atmosphere and come to us, you don't know how delighted we should be. You should have your own way as completely as though you were at home. You should have a cheery room, and you should have a Swiss chalet all to yourself to write in. *Smoking regarded as a personal favour to the family.* Georgina is so insupportably vain on account of being a favourite of yours, that you might find *her* a drawback; but nothing else would turn out in that way, I hope.

Won't you manage it? *Do* think of it. If, for instance, you would come back with us on that Guild Saturday. I have turned the house upside down and

inside out since you were here, and have carved new rooms out of places then non-existent. Pray do think of it, and do manage it. I should be heartily pleased.

I hope you will find the purpose and the plot of my book ["Our Mutual Friend"] very plain when you see it as a whole piece. I am looking forward to sending you the proofs complete about the end of next month. It is all sketched out and I am working hard on it, giving it all the pains possible to be bestowed on a labour of love. Your critical opinion two months in advance of the public will be invaluable to me. For you know what store I set by it, and how I think over a hint from you. . . .

If your constituency don't bring you in they deserve to lose you, and may the gods continue to confound them! I shudder at the thought of such life as political life. Would there not seem to be something horribly rotten in the system of it, when one stands amazed how any man—not forced into it by position, as you are—can bear to live it?

But the private life here is my point, and again I urge upon you. Do think of it, and Do come.

I want to tell you how I have been impressed by the "Boatman." It haunts me as only a beautiful and profound thing can. The lines are always running in my head, as the river runs with me.

Ever affectionately.

To Edmund Yates.

Hôtel du Helder, Paris,
Saturday, Thirtieth September, 1865.

My dear Edmund—The heat has been excessive on this side of the Channel, and I got a slight sunstroke last Thursday, and was obliged to be doctored and put to bed for a day; but, thank God, I am all right again. The man who sells the *tisane* on the Boulevards can't keep the flies out of his glasses, and as he wears them on his red velvet bands, the flies work themselves into the ends of the tumblers, trying to get through and tickle the man. If fly life were long enough, I think they would at last. Three paving blouses came to work at the corner of this street last Monday, pulled up a bit of road, sat down to look at it, and fell asleep. On Tues-

day one of the blouses spat on his hands and seemed to be going to begin, but didn't. The other two have shown no sign of life whatever. This morning the industrious one ate a loaf. You may rely upon this as the latest news from the French capital. Faithfully ever.

To M. de Cerjat.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Thirteenth November, 1865.

My dear Cerjat—Having achieved my book and my Christmas number, and having shaken myself after two years' work, I send you my annual greeting. How are you? Asthmatic, I know you will reply; but as my poor father (who was asthmatic, too, and the jolliest of men) used philosophically to say, "one must have something wrong, I suppose, and I like to know what it is."

In England we are groaning under the brigandage of the butcher, which is being carried to that height that I think I foresee resistance on the part of the middle-class, and some combination in perspective for abolishing the middle-man, whensoever he turns up (which is everywhere) between producer and consumer. The cattle plague is the butcher's stalking-horse, and it is unquestionably worse than it was; but seeing that the great majority of creatures lost or destroyed have been cows, and likewise that the rise in butcher's meat bears no reasonable proportion to the market prices of the beasts, one comes to the conclusion that the public is done. The commission has ended very weakly and ineffectually, as such things in England rather frequently do; and everybody writes to the "Times," and nobody does anything else.

If the Americans don't embroil us in a war before long it will not be their fault. What with their swagger and bombast, what with their claims for indemnification, what with Ireland and Fenianism, and what with Canada, I have strong apprehensions. With a settled animosity towards the French usurper, I believe him to have always been sound in his desire to divide the States against themselves, and that we were unsound and wrong in "letting I dare not wait upon I would." The Jamaica insurrection is another hopeful piece of business. That plat-

form-sympathy with the black—or the native, or the devil—afar off, and that platform indifference to our own countrymen at enormous odds in the midst of bloodshed and savagery, makes me stark wild. Only the other day, there was a meeting of jawbones of asses at Manchester, to censure the Jamaica Governor for his manner of putting down the insurrection! So we are badgered about New Zealanders and Hottentots, as if they were identical with men in clean shirts at Camberwell, and were to be bound by pen and ink accordingly. So Exeter Hall holds us in mortal submission to missionaries, who (Livingstone always excepted) are perfect nuisances, and leave every place worse than they found it.

Of all the many evidences that are visible of our being ill-governed, no one is so remarkable to me as our ignorance of what is going on under our Government. What will future generations think of that enormous Indian Mutiny being ripened without suspicion, until whole regiments arose and killed their officers? A week ago, red tape, half bouncing and half pooh-poohing what it bounced at, would have scouted the idea of a Dublin jail not being able to hold a political prisoner. But for the blacks in Jamaica being over-impatient and before their time, the whites might have been exterminated, without a previous hint or suspicion that there was anything amiss. *Laissez-aller*, and Britons never, never, never!——

Meantime, if your honour were in London, you would see a great embankment rising high and dry out of the Thames on the Middlesex shore, from Westminster Bridge to Blackfriars. A really fine work, and really getting on. Moreover, a great system of drainage. Another really fine work, and likewise really getting on. Lastly, a muddle of railways in all directions possible and impossible, with no general public scheme, no general public supervision, enormous waste of money, no fixable responsibility, no accountability but under Lord Campbell's Act. I think of that accident in which I was preserved. Before the most furious and notable train in the four-and-twenty hours, the head of a gang of workmen takes up the rails. That train changes its time every day as the tide changes, and that head workman is not provided by the railway company with any clock or watch! Lord Shaftesbury wrote to me to ask me what

I thought of an obligation on railway companies to put strong walls to all bridges and viaducts. I told him, of course, that the force of such a shock would carry away anything that any company could set up, and I added: "Ask the minister what *he* thinks about the votes of the railway interest in the House of Commons, and about his being afraid to lay a finger on it with an eye to his majority."

I seem to be grumbling, but I am in the best of humours. All goes well with me and mine, thank God.

Last night my gardener came upon a man in the garden and fired. The man returned the compliment by kicking him in the groin and causing him great pain. I set off with a great mastiff-bloodhound I have, in pursuit. Couldn't find the evil-doer, but had the greatest difficulty in preventing the dog from tearing two policemen down. They were coming towards us with professional mystery, and he was in the air on his way to the throat of an eminently respectable constable when I caught him.

It has been blowing here tremendously for a fortnight, but to-day is like a spring day, and plenty of roses are growing over the labourers' cottages. The Great Eastern lies at her moorings beyond the window where I write these words; looks very dull and unpromising. A dark column of smoke from Chatham Dockyard, where the iron shipbuilding is in progress, has a greater significance in it, I fancy.

* * * * * *

To Percy Fitzgerald.

Gad's Hill, *Thursday, Thirtieth November*, 1865.

My dear Fitzgerald—I should have answered your last note long ago but for having been perpetually occupied.

That notice of the ship broker's garden takes my fancy strongly. If I had not been already at work upon the Xmas No. when you suggested it to me, I think I must have tried my hand upon it. As it is, I often revert to it, and go about it and about it, and pat it into new forms, much as the buttermen in the shops (who have something of a literary air at their wooden desks) pat the butter. I have been vexed by not being able to get your

story into "Dr. Marigold." I tried it again and again, but *could not* adapt its length to the other requirements of the No. Once, I sent it; but I was not easy afterwards, and thought it best to restore the excision, and leave the whole for a regular No. The difficulty of fitting and adjusting this unusual job, is hardly to be imagined without trying it. For the rest, I hope you will like the Doctor—and know him at once—for he speaks for himself in the first paper and the last. Also I recommend to your perusal a certain ghost story, headed "To be taken with a grain of salt." *

Sultan has grown immensely, and is a sight. But he is so accursedly fierce towards other dogs, that I am obliged to take him out muzzled. Also he has an invincible repugnance to soldiers, which, in a military country, is inconvenient. Such is the spirit of the dog that, with his muzzle tight on, he dashed into the heart of a company in heavy marching order (only the other day), and pulled down an objectionable private. Except under such provocations, he is as gentle and docile with me, as a dog can possibly be. Last night, the gardener fired at some man in the garden, upon whom he came suddenly, and who attacked him in a desperate manner. I immediately turned out, unloosed Sultan, and hunted the vagabond. We couldn't get hold of him, but the intelligence of the dog, and the delighted confidence he imparted to me, as he tumbled across country in the dark, were quite enchanting. Two policemen appearing in the distance and making a professional show of stealthiness had a narrow escape. As he was in the act of flying at them, I was obliged to hold him round the neck with both arms (like the little boy in the snow with the St. Bernard dog, grown up), and call to the Force to vanish in an inglorious manner.

A friend has sent me from America a thoroughbred black Newfoundland dog, since you were here. Sultan (who hates him mortally), he, Linda, I, and three or four small dogs in the nature of canine parasites and toadies, make a show in the lanes and roads which I specially beseech you to come and see. We only want the renowned dog Cæsar to make us matchless.

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* Written by Dickens.—Ed.

I hope you are in force and spirits with your new story.
—My dear Fitzgerald, Faithfully yours always.

To Miss Mary Boyle.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Saturday, Sixth January, 1866.

My dear Mary—Feeling pretty certain that I shall never answer your letter unless I answer it at once (I got it this morning), here goes!

I did not dramatise "The Master of Ravenswood," though I did a good deal towards and about the piece, having an earnest desire to put Scott, for once, upon the stage in his own gallant manner. It is *an enormous success*, and increases in attraction nightly. I have never seen the people in all parts of the house so leaning forward, in lines sloping towards the stage, earnestly and intently attentive, as while the story gradually unfolds itself. But the astonishing circumstance of all is, that Miss Leclercq (never thought of for Lucy till all other Lucies had failed) is marvellously good, highly pathetic, and almost unrecognisable in person! What note it touches in her, always dumb until now, I do not pretend to say, but there is no one on the stage who could play the contract scene better, or more simply and naturally, and I find it impossible to see it without crying! Almost every one plays well, the whole is exceedingly picturesque, and there is scarcely a movement throughout, or a look, that is not indicated by Scott. So you get a life romance with beautiful illustrations, and I do not expect ever again to see a book take up its bed and walk in like manner.

I am charmed to learn that you have had a freeze out of my ghost story. It rather did give me a shiver up the back in the writing. "Dr. Marigold" has just now accomplished his two hundred thousand. My only other news about myself is that I am doubtful whether to read or not in London this season. If I decide to do it at all, I shall probably do it on a large scale.

Many happy years to you, my dear Mary. So prays
Your ever affectionate
Jo.

To Miss Lily Benzon.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Monday, Eighteenth June, 1866.

My dear Lily—I am sorry that I cannot come to read to you "The Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," as you ask me to do; but the truth is, that I am tired of reading at this present time, and have come into the country to rest and hear the birds sing. There are a good many birds, I dare say, in Kensington Palace Gardens, and upon my word and honour they are much better worth listening to than I am. So let them sing to you as hard as ever they can, while their sweet voices last (they will be silent when the winter comes); and very likely after you and I have eaten our next Christmas pudding and mince-pies, you and I and Uncle Harry may all meet together at St. James's Hall; Uncle Harry to bring you there, to hear the "Boots"; I to receive you there, and read the "Boots"; and you (I hope) to applaud very much, and tell me that you like the "Boots." So, God bless you and me, and Uncle Harry, and the "Boots," and long life and happiness to us all!

Your affectionate Friend.

PS.—There's a flourish!

To a Person Unnamed.

Gad's Hill, *Thursday, Twenty-seventh December*, 1866.

Dear Madam—You make an absurd, though common mistake, in supposing that any human creature can help you to be an authoress, if you cannot become one in virtue of your own powers. I know nothing about "impenetrable barriers," "outsiders," and "charmed circles." I know that any one who can write what is suitable to the requirements of my own journal—for instance—is a person I am heartily glad to discover, and do not very often find. And I believe this to be no rare case in periodical literature. I cannot undertake to advise you in the abstract, as I number my unknown correspondents by the hundred. But if you offer anything to me for insertion in "All the Year Round," you may be sure that it will be honestly read, and that it will be judged

by no test but its own merits and adaptability to those pages.

But I am bound to add that I do not regard successful fiction as a thing to be achieved in "leisure moments."

Faithfully yours.

To W. C. Macready.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Friday, Twenty-eighth December, 1866.

My dearest Macready—You will be interested in knowing that, encouraged by the success of summer cricket-matches, I got up a quantity of footraces and rustic sports in my field here on the twenty-sixth last past: as I have never yet had a case of drunkenness, the landlord of The Falstaff had a drinking-booth on the ground. All the prizes I gave were in money, too. We had two thousand people here. Among the crowd were soldiers, navvies, and labourers of all kinds. Not a stake was pulled up, or a rope slackened, or one farthing's-worth of damage done. To every competitor (only) a printed bill of general rules was given, with the concluding words: "Mr. Dickens puts every man upon his honour to assist in preserving order." There was not a dispute all day, and they went away at sunset rending the air with cheers, and leaving every flag on a six-hundred yards' course as neat as they found it when the gates were opened at ten in the morning. Surely this is a bright sign in the neighbourhood of such a place as Chatham!

"Mugby Junction" turned, yesterday afternoon, the extraordinary number of two hundred and fifty thousand!

In the middle of next month I begin a new course of readings. If any of them bring me within reach of Cheltenham, with an hour to spare, I shall come on to you, even for that hour. More of this when I am afield and have my list.

I begin to discover in your riper years, that you have been secretly vain of your handwriting all your life. For I swear I see no change in it! What it always was since I first knew it (a year or two!) it *is*. This I will maintain against all comers.—Ever affectionately,

My dearest Macready.

To M. de Cerjat.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
New Year's Day, 1867.

My dear Cerjat—Thoroughly determined to be beforehand with "the middle of next summer," your penitent friend and remorseful correspondent thus addresses you.

The big dog [Sultan] on a day last autumn, having seized a little girl (sister to one of the servants) whom he knew, and was bound to respect, was flogged by his master, and then sentenced to be shot at seven next morning. He went out very cheerfully with the half-dozen men told off for the purpose, evidently thinking that they were going to be the death of somebody unknown. But observing in the procession an empty wheelbarrow and a double-barrelled gun, he became meditative, and fixed the bearer of the gun with his eyes. A stone deftly thrown across him by the village blackguard (chief mourner) caused him to look round for an instant, and then he fell dead, shot through the heart. Two posthumous children are at this moment rolling on the lawn; one will evidently inherit his ferocity, and will probably inherit the gun. The pheasant was a little ailing towards Christmas Day, and was found dead under some ivy in his cage, with his head under his wing, on the morning of the Twenty-seventh of December, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six. I, proprietor of the remains of the two deceased, am working hard, getting up "Barbox" and "The Boy at Mugby," with which I begin a new series of readings in London on the fifteenth. Next morning I believe I start into the country. When I read, I *don't* write. I only edit, and have the proof-sheets sent me for the purpose. Here are your questions answered.

As to the Reform question, it should have been, and could have been, perfectly known to any honest man in England that the more intelligent part of the great masses were deeply dissatisfied with the state of representation, but were in a very moderate and patient condition, awaiting the better intellectual cultivation of numbers of their fellows. The old insolent resource of assailing them and making the most audaciously wicked statements that they are politically indifferent, has borne the inevitable fruit. The perpetual taunt, "Where are

they?" has called them out with the answer: "Well, then, if you *must* know, here we are." The intolerable injustice of vituperating the bribed to an assembly of bribers, has goaded their sense of justice beyond endurance. And now, what they would have taken they won't take, and whatever they are steadily bent upon having they will get. Rely upon it, this is the real state of the case. As to your friend "Punch," you will find him begin to turn at the very selfsame instant when the new game shall manifestly become the losing one. You may notice his shoes pinching him a little already.

My dear fellow, I have no more power to stop that mutilation of my books than you have. It is as certain as that every inventor of anything designed for the public good, and offered to the English Government, becomes *ipso facto* a criminal, to have his heart broken on the circumlocutional wheel. It is as certain as that the whole Crimean story will be retold, whenever this country again goes to war. And to tell the truth, I have such a very small opinion of what the great genteel have done for us, that I am very philosophical indeed concerning what the great vulgar may do, having a decided opinion that they can't do worse.

This is the time of year when the theatres do best, there being still numbers of people who make it a sort of religion to see Christmas pantomimes. Having my annual houseful, I have, as yet, seen nothing. Fechter has neither pantomime nor burlesque, but is doing a new version of the old "Trente Ans de la Vie d'un Joueur." I am afraid he will not find his account in it. On the whole, the theatres, except in the articles of scenery and pictorial effect, are poor enough. But in some of the smaller houses there are actors who, if there were any dramatic head-quarters as a school, might become very good. The most hopeless feature is, that they have the smallest possible idea of an effective and harmonious whole, each "going in" for himself or herself. The music-halls attract an immense public, and don't refine the general taste. But such things as they do are well done of their kind, and always briskly and punctually.

The American yacht race is the last sensation. I hope the general interest felt in it on this side will have a wholesome interest on that. It will be a woeful day when John

and Jonathan throw their caps into the ring. The French Emperor is indubitably in a dangerous state. His Parisian popularity wanes, and his army are discontented with him. I hear on high authority that his secret police are always making discoveries that render him desperately uneasy.

You know how we have been swindling in these parts. But perhaps you don't know that Mr. ——, the "eminent" contractor, before he fell into difficulties, settled *one million of money* on his wife. Such a good and devoted husband!

My daughter Katie has been very ill of nervous fever. On the Twenty-seventh of December she was in a condition to be brought down here (old high road and post-horses), and has been steadily getting better ever since. Her husband is here too, and is on the whole as well as he ever is or ever will be, I fear.

We played forfeit-games here, last night, and then pool; for a billiard-room has been added to the house since you were here. Come and play a match with me.

Always affectionately.

To Miss Hogarth.

Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool,
Monday, Twenty-first January, 1867.

My dearest Georgy—First I send you my most affectionate wishes for many, many happy returns of your birthday. That done, from my heart of hearts, I go on to my small report of myself.

The readings have produced such an immense effect here that we are coming back for two more in the middle of February.

It being next to impossible for people to come out at night with horses, we have felt the weather in the stalls, and expect to do so through the week. The enthusiasm has been unbounded. On Friday night I quite astonished myself; but I was taken so faint afterwards that they laid me on a sofa at the hall for half an hour. I attribute it to my distressing inability to sleep at night, and to nothing worse.

Scott does very well indeed. As a dresser he is perfect. In a quarter of an hour after I go into the retiring-room, where all my clothes are airing and everything is set out

neatly in its own allotted space, I am ready; and he then goes softly out, and sits outside the door. In the morning he is equally punctual, quiet, and quick. He has his needles and thread, buttons, and so forth, always at hand; and in travelling he is very systematic with the luggage. What with Dolby and what with this skilful valet, everything is made as easy to me as it possibly *can* be.

There is great distress here among the poor (four thousand people relieved last Saturday at one workhouse), and there is great anxiety concerning *seven mail-steamers some days overdue*. Such a circumstance as this last has never been known. It is supposed that some great revolving storm has whirled them all out of their course. One of these missing ships is an American mail, another an Australian mail.

To Miss Dickens.

Chester, *Tuesday, Twenty-second January*, 1867.

My dearest Mamie—We came over here from Liverpool at eleven this forenoon. There was a heavy swell in the Mersey breaking over the boat; the cold was nipping, and all the roads we saw as we came along were wretched. This seems to be a very nice hotel, but it is an extraordinarily cold one. Our reading for to-night is "Marigold" and "Trial."

Barton, the gasman who succeeded the man who sprained his leg, sprained *his* leg yesterday!! And that, not at his work, but in running downstairs at the hotel. However, he has hobbled through it so far, and I hope will hobble on, for he knows his work.

I have seldom seen a place look more hopelessly frozen up than this place does. The hall is like a Methodist chapel in low spirits, and with a cold in its head. A few blue people shiver at the corners of the streets. And this house, which is outside the town, looks like an ornament on an immense twelfth cake baked for 1847.

I am now going to the fire to try to warm myself, but have not the least expectation of succeeding. The sitting-room has two large windows in it, down to the ground and facing due east. The adjoining bedroom (mine) has also two large windows in it, down to the ground and facing due east. The very large doors are opposite the

large windows, and I feel as if I were something to eat in a pantry.

To a Person Unnamed.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Tuesday, Fifth February, 1867.

Dear Sir—I have looked at the larger half of the first volume of your novel, and have pursued the more difficult points of the story through the other two volumes.

You will, of course, receive my opinion as that of an individual writer and student of art, who by no means claims to be infallible.

I think you are too ambitious, and that you have not sufficient knowledge of life or character to venture on so comprehensive an attempt. Evidences of inexperience in every way, and of your power being far below the situations that you imagine, present themselves to me in almost every page I have read. It would greatly surprise me if you found a publisher for this story, on trying your fortune in that line, or derived anything from it but weariness and bitterness of spirit.

On the evidence thus put before me, I cannot even entirely satisfy myself that you have the faculty of authorship latent within you. If you have not, and yet pursue a vocation towards which you have no call, you cannot choose but be a wretched man. Let me counsel you to have the patience to form yourself carefully, and the courage to renounce the endeavour if you cannot establish your case on a very much smaller scale. You see around you every day, how many outlets there are for short pieces of fiction in all kinds. Try if you can achieve any success within these modest limits (I have practised in my time what I preach to you), and in the meantime put your three volumes away. Faithfully yours.

To the Hon. Robert Lytton ("Owen Meredith").

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Wednesday, Seventeenth April, 1867.

My dear Robert Lytton—It would have been really painful to me, if I had seen you and yours at a Reading of mine in right of any other credentials than my own. Your appreciation has given me higher and purer grati-

fication than your modesty can readily believe. When I first entered on this interpretation of myself (then quite strange in the public ear) I was sustained by the hope that I could drop into some hearts, some new expression of the meaning of my books, that would touch them in a new way. To this hour that purpose is so strong in me, and so real are my fictions to myself, that, after hundreds of nights, I come with a feeling of perfect freshness to that little red table, and laugh and cry with my hearers, as if I had never stood there before. You will know from this what a delight it is to be delicately understood, and why your earnest words cannot fail to move me.

* * * * * *

Affectionately yours.

To Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester,
Thursday, Eighteenth April, 1867.

My dear Stanny—The time of year reminds me how the months have gone, since I last heard from you through Mrs. Stanfield.

I hope you have not thought me unmindful of you in the meanwhile. I have been almost constantly travelling and reading. England, Ireland, and Scotland have laid hold of me by turns, and I have had no rest. As soon as I had finished this kind of work last year, I had to fall to work upon "All the Year Round" and the Christmas number. I was no sooner quit of that task, and the Christmas season was but run out to its last day, when I was tempted into another course of fifty readings that are not yet over. I am here now for two days, and have not seen the place since Twelfth Night. When a reading in London has been done, I have been brought up for it from some great distance, and have next morning been carried back again. But the fifty will be "paid out" (as we say at sea) by the middle of May, and then I hope to see you.

Reading at Cheltenham the other day, I saw Macready, who sent his love to you. His face was much more massive and as it used to be, than when I saw him previous to his illness. His wife takes admirable care of him, and is on the happiest terms with his daughter Katie. His boy by the second marriage is a jolly little fellow, and leads a

far easier life than the children you and I remember, who used to come in at dessert and have each a biscuit and a glass of water, in which last refreshment I was always convinced that they drank, with the gloomiest malignity, "Destruction to the gormandising grown-up company!"

I hope to look up your latest triumphs on the day of the Academy dinner. Of course as yet I have had no opportunity of even hearing of what any one has done. I have been (in a general way) snowed up for four months. The locomotive with which I was going to Ireland was dug out of the snow at midnight, in Wales. Both passages across were made in a furious snowstorm. The snow lay ankle-deep in Dublin, and froze hard at Belfast. In Scotland it slanted before a perpetual east wind. In Yorkshire, it derived novelty from thunder and lightning. Whirlwinds everywhere I don't mention.

God bless you and yours. If I look like some weather-beaten pilot when we meet, don't be surprised. Any mahogany-faced stranger who holds out his hand to you will probably turn out, on inspection, to be the old original Dick.—Ever, my dear Stanny,

Your faithful and affectionate.

PS.—I wish you could have been with me (of course in a snowstorm) one day on the pier at Tynemouth. There was a very heavy sea running, and a perfect fleet of screw merchantmen were plunging in and out on the turn of the tide at high-water. Suddenly there came a golden horizon, and a most glorious rainbow burst out, arching one large ship, as if she were sailing direct for heaven. I was so enchanted by the scene, that I became oblivious of a few thousand tons of water coming on in an enormous roller, and was knocked down and beaten by its spray when it broke, and so completely wetted through and through, that the very pockets in my pocket-book were full of sea.

To W. H. Wills.

Thursday, Sixth June, 1867.

My dear Wills—I cannot tell you how warmly I feel your letter, or how deeply I appreciate the affection and regard in which it originates. I thank you for it with all my heart.

You will not suppose that I make light of any of your misgivings if I present the other side of the question. Every objection that you make strongly impresses me, and will be revolved in my mind again and again.

When I went to America in '42, I was so much younger, but (I think) very much weaker too. I had had a painful surgical operation performed shortly before going out, and had had the labour from week to week of "Master Humphrey's Clock." My life in the States was a life of continual speech-making (quite as laborious as reading), and I was less patient and more irritable then than I am now. My idea of a course of readings in America is, that it would involve far less travelling than you suppose, that the large first-class rooms would absorb the whole course, and that the receipts would be very much larger than your estimate, unless the demand for the readings is ENORMOUSLY EXAGGERATED ON ALL HANDS. There is considerable reason for this view of the case. And I can hardly think that all the speculators who beset, and all the private correspondents who urge me, are in a conspiracy or under a common delusion.

* * * * * *

I shall never rest much while my faculties last, and (if I know myself) have a certain something in me that would still be active in rusting and corroding me, if I flattered myself that I was in repose. On the other hand, I think that my habit of easy self-abstraction and withdrawal into fancies has always refreshed and strengthened me in short intervals wonderfully. I always seem to myself to have rested far more than I have worked; and I do really believe that I have some exceptional faculty of accumulating young feelings in short pauses, which obliterates a quantity of wear and tear.

My worldly circumstances (such a large family considered) are very good. I don't want money. All my possessions are free and in the best order. Still, at fifty-five or fifty-six, the likelihood of making a very great addition to one's capital in half a year is an immense consideration. . . . I repeat the phrase, because there should be something large to set against the objections.

I dine with Forster to-day, to talk it over. I have no doubt he will urge most of your objections and particu-

larly the last, though the American friends and correspondents he has, have undoubtedly staggered him more than I ever knew him to be staggered on the money question. Be assured that no one can present any argument to me which will weigh more heartily with me than your kind words, and that whatever comes of my present state of abeyance, I shall never forget your letter or cease to be grateful for it.—Ever, my dear Wills,

Faithfully yours.

To W. H. Wills.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Sunday, Thirteenth June, 1867.

My dear Wills—I have read the first three numbers of Wilkie's story ["The Moonstone"] this morning, and have gone minutely through the plot of the rest to the last line. It gives a series of "narratives," but it is a very curious story, wild, and yet domestic, with excellent character in it, and great mystery. It is prepared with extraordinary care, and has every chance of being a hit. It is in many respects much better than anything he has done.

I have an impression that it was not Silvester who tried Eliza Fenning, but Knowles. One can hardly suppose Thornbury to make such a mistake, but I wish you would look into the "Annual Register." I have added a final paragraph about the unfairness of the judge, whoever he was. I distinctly recollect to have read of his "putting down" of Eliza Fenning's father when the old man made some miserable suggestion in his daughter's behalf (this is not noticed by Thornbury), and he also stopped some suggestion that a knife thrust into a loaf adulterated with alum would present the appearance that these knives presented. But I may have got both these points from looking up some pamphlets in Upcott's collection which I once had.

Your account of your journey reminds me of one of the latest American stories, how a traveller by stage-coach said to the driver: "Did you ever see a snail, sir?" "Yes, sir." "Where did you meet him, sir?" "I *didn't* meet him, sir!" "Wa'al, sir, I think you did, if you'll excuse me, for I'm damned if you ever overtook him."

Ever faithfully.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Tuesday, Second July, 1867.

This is to certify that I, the undersigned, was (for the time being) a drivelling ass when I declared the Christmas Number to be composed of Thirty-two pages. And I do hereby declare that the said Christmas Number is composed of Forty-eight pages, and long and heavy pages too, as I have heretofore proved and demonstrated with the sweat of my brow.

(Signed) Charles Dickens.

Witness to the signature of the said Charles Dickens:
Bumble (Puppy).

To F. D. Finlay.*

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Tuesday, Third September, 1867.

This is to certify that the undersigned victim of a periodical paragraph-disease, which usually breaks out once in every seven years (proceeding to England by the overland route to India and per Cunard line to America, where it strikes the base of the Rocky Mountains, and, rebounding to Europe, perishes on the steppes of Russia), is *not* in a "critical state of health," and has *not* consulted "eminent surgeons," and never was better in his life, and is *not* recommended to proceed to the United States for "cessation from literary labour," and has not had so much as a headache for twenty years.

Charles Dickens.

To James T. Fields.

Third September, 1867.

My dear Fields—Your cheering letter of the Twenty-first of August arrived here this morning. A thousand thanks for it. I begin to think (nautically) that I "head west'ard."

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* Contradicting a newspaper report that Dickens was "in a critical state of health."—Ed.

The other day I received a letter from Mr. ——, of New York (who came over in the winning yacht, and described the voyage in the "Times"), saying that he would much like to see me. I made an appointment in London, and observed that when he *did* see me he was obviously astonished. While I was sensible that the magnificence of my appearance would fully account for his being overcome, I nevertheless angled for the cause of his surprise. He then told me that there was a paragraph going round the papers to the effect that I was "in a critical state of health." I asked him if he was sure it wasn't "cricketing" state of health. To which he replied, Quite. I then asked him down here to dinner, and he was again staggered by finding me in sporting training; also much amused.

Yesterday's and to-day's post bring me this unaccountable paragraph from hosts of uneasy friends, with the enormous and wonderful addition that "eminent surgeons" are sending me to America for "cessation from literary labour"! ! ! So I have written a quiet line to the "Times," certifying to my own state of health, and have also begged Dixon to do the like in the "Athenæum." I mention the matter to you, in order that you may contradict, from me, if the nonsense should reach America unaccompanied by the truth. But I suppose that the "New York Herald" will probably have got the letter from Mr. —— aforesaid. . . .

Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins are here; and the joke of the time is to feel my pulse when I appear at table, and also to inveigle innocent messengers to come over to the summer-house, where I write (the place is quite changed since you were here, and a tunnel under the highroad connects this shrubbery with the front garden), to ask, with their compliments, how I find myself *now*.

If I come to America this next November, even you can hardly imagine with what interest I shall try "Copperfield" on an American audience, or, if they give me their heart, how freely and fully I shall give them mine.

I cannot thank you enough for your invaluable help to Dolby.* He writes that at every turn and moment the

*George Dolby, Dickens's manager.—Ed.

sense and knowledge and tact of Mr. Osgood * are inestimable to him.—Ever, my dear Fields,

Faithfully yours.

To Miss Dickens.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
No. 26 Wellington Street, Strand, London, W.C.,
Monday, Thirtieth September, 1867.

My dearest Mamie—You will have had my telegram that I go to America. After a long discussion with Forster, and consideration of what is to be said on both sides, I have decided to go through with it. I doubt the profit being as great as the calculation makes it, but the prospect is sufficiently alluring to turn the scale on the American side.

Love to all.

We have telegraphed "Yes" to Boston.

I begin to feel myself drawn towards America, as Darnay, in the "Tale of Two Cities," was attracted to the Loadstone Rock, Paris. Ever your affectionate Father.

To James T. Fields.†

October, 1867.

My dear Fields—I hope the telegraph clerks did not mutilate out of recognition or reasonable guess the words I added to Dolby's last telegram to Boston. "'Tribune' London correspondent totally false." Not only is there not a word of truth in the pretended conversation, but it is so absurdly unlike me that I cannot suppose it to be even invented by any one who ever heard me exchange a word with mortal creature. For twenty years I am perfectly certain that I have never made any other allusion to the republication of my books in America than the good-humoured remark, "that if there had been international copyright between England and the States, I should have been a man of very large fortune, instead

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* James R. Osgood, of the firm of Ticknor and Fields, Boston, Mass.—Ed.

† A ridiculous paragraph in the papers following close on the public announcement that Dickens was coming to America in November, drew from him this letter to Mr. Fields, dated early in October.—Ed.

of a man of moderate savings, always supporting a very expensive public position." Nor have I ever been such a fool as to charge the absence of international copyright upon individuals. Nor have I ever been so ungenerous as to disguise or suppress the fact that I have received handsome sums for advance sheets. When I was in the States, I said what I had to say on the question, and there an end. I am absolutely certain that I have never since expressed myself, even with soreness, on the subject. Reverting to the preposterous fabrication of the London correspondent, the statement that I ever talked about "these fellows" who republished my books or pretended to know (what I don't know at this instant) who made how much out of them, or ever talked of their sending me "conscience money," is as grossly and completely false as the statement that I ever said anything to the effect that I could not be expected to have an interest in the American people. And nothing can by any possibility be falser than that. Again and again in these pages ("All the Year Round") I have expressed my interest in them. You will see it in the last preface to "American Notes." Every American who has ever spoken with me in London, Paris, or where not, knows whether I have frankly said, "You could have no better introduction to me than your country." And for years and years when I have been asked about reading in America, my invariable reply has been, "I have so many friends there, and constantly receive so many earnest letters from personally unknown readers there, that, but for domestic reasons, I would go to-morrow." I think I must, in the confidential intercourse between you and me, have written you to this effect more than once.

The statement of the London correspondent from beginning to end is false. It is false in the letter and false in the spirit. He may have been misinformed, and the statement may not have originated with him. With whomsoever it originated, it never originated with me, and consequently is false. More than enough about it.

As I hope to see you so soon, my dear Fields, and as I am busily at work on the Christmas number, I will not make this a longer letter than I can help. I thank you most heartily for your proffered hospitality, and need not tell you that if I went to any friend's house in America,

I would go to yours. But the readings are very hard work, and I think I cannot do better than observe the rule on that side of the Atlantic which I observe on this, of never, under such circumstances, going to a friend's house, but always staying at a hotel. I am able to observe it here, by being consistent and never breaking it. If I am equally consistent there, I can (I hope) offend no one.—Ever, my dear Fields,

Heartily and affectionately yours.

To Miss Dickens.

Aboard the Cuba, Queenstown Harbour,
Sunday, Tenth November, 1867.

My dearest Mamie—We arrived here at seven this morning, and shall probably remain awaiting our mail, until four or five this afternoon. The weather in the passage here was delightful, and we had scarcely any motion beyond that of the screw.

We are nearly but not quite full of passengers. At table I sit next the captain, on his right, on the outside of the table and close to the door. My little cabin is big enough for everything but getting up in and going to bed in. As it has a good window which I can leave open all night, and a door which I can set open too, it suits my chief requirements of it—plenty of air—admirably. On a writing slab in it, which pulls out when wanted, I now write in a majestic manner.

Many of the passengers are American, and I am already on the best terms with nearly all the ship.

We began our voyage yesterday a very little while after you left us, which was a great relief. The wind is S.E. this morning, and if it would keep so we should go along nobly. My dearest love to your aunt, and also to Katie and all the rest. I am in very good health, thank God, and as well as possible.

To Miss Hogarth.

Aboard the Cuba, Five Days out,
Wednesday, Thirteenth November, 1867.

My dearest Georgy—As I wrote to Mamie last, I now write to you, or mean to do it, if the motion of the ship will let me.

We are very nearly halfway to-day. The weather was favourable for us until yesterday morning, when we got a head-wind which still stands by us. We have rolled and pitched, of course; but on the whole have been wonderfully well off. I have had headache and have felt faint once or twice, *but have not been sick at all.* My spacious cabin is very noisy at night, as the most important working of the ship goes on outside my window and over my head; but it is very airy, and if the weather be bad and I can't open the window, I can open the door all night. If the weather be fine (as it is now), I can open both door and window, and write between them. Last night, I got a foot-bath under the dignified circumstances of sitting on a camp-stool in my cabin, and having the bath (and my feet) in the passage outside. The officers' quarters are close to me, and, as I know them all, I get reports of the weather and the way we are making when the watch is changed, and I am (as I usually am) lying awake. The motion of the screw is at its slightest vibration in my particular part of the ship. The silent captain, reported gruff, is a very good fellow and an honest fellow. Kelly has been ill all the time, and not of the slightest use, and is ill now. Scott always cheerful, and useful, and ready; a better servant for the kind of work there never can have been. Young Lowndes has been fearfully sick until mid-day yesterday. His cabin is pitch dark, and full of blackbeetles. He shares mine until nine o'clock at night, when Scott carries him off to bed. He also dines with me in my magnificent chamber. This passage in winter time cannot be said to be an enjoyable excursion, but I certainly am making it under the best circumstances.

So much for my news, except that I have been constantly reading, and find that "Pierra" that Mrs. Hogge sent me by Katie to be a very remarkable book, not only for its grim and horrible story, but for its suggestion of wheels within wheels, and sad human mysteries. Baker's second book not nearly so good as his first, but his first anticipated it.

Saturday, Sixteenth.

Last Thursday afternoon a heavy gale of wind sprang up and blew hard until dark, when it seemed to lull. But

it then came on again with great violence, and blew tremendously all night. The noise, and the rolling and plunging of the ship, were awful. Nobody on board could get any sleep, and numbers of passengers were rolled out of their berths. Having a side-board to mine to keep me in, like a baby, I lay still. But it was a dismal night indeed, and it was curious to see the change it had made in the faces of all the passengers yesterday. It cannot be denied that these winter crossings are very trying and startling; while the personal discomfort of not being able to wash, and the miseries of getting up and going to bed, with what small means there are all sliding, and sloping, and slopping about, are really in their way distressing.

This forenoon we made Cape Race, and are now running along at full speed with the land beside us. Kelly still useless, and positively declining to show on deck. Scott, with an eight-day-old moustache, more super-like than ever. My foot (I hope from walking on the boarded deck) in a very shy condition to-day, and rather painful. I shaved this morning for the first time since Liverpool; dodging at the glass, very much like Fechter's imitation of ——. The white cat that came off with us in the tender a general favourite. She belongs to the daughter of a Southerner, returning with his wife and family from a two-years' tour in Europe.

Sunday, Seventeenth.

At four o'clock this morning we got into bad weather again, and the state of things at breakfast-time was unutterably miserable. Nearly all the passengers in their berths—no possibility of standing on deck—sickness and groans—impracticable to pass a cup of tea from one pair of hands to another. It has slightly moderated since (between two and three in the afternoon I write), and the sun is shining, but the rolling of the ship surpasses all imagination or description.

I write with great difficulty, wedged up in a corner, and having my heels on the paper as often as the pen. Kelly worse than ever, and Scott better than ever.

My desk and I have just arisen from the floor.

To Miss Dickens.

Parker House, Boston,
Thursday, Twenty-first November, 1867.

I arrived here on Tuesday night, after a very slow passage from Halifax against head-winds. All the tickets for the first four readings here (all yet announced) were sold immediately on their being issued.

You know that I begin on the Second of December with "Carol" and "Trial"? Shall be heartily glad to begin to count the readings off.

This is an immense hotel, with all manner of white marble public passages and public rooms. I live in a corner high up, and have a hot and cold bath in my bedroom (communicating with the sitting-room), and comforts not in existence when I was here before. The cost of living is enormous, but happily we can afford it. I dine to-day with Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, and Agassiz. Longfellow was here yesterday. Perfectly white in hair and beard, but a remarkably handsome and notable-looking man. The city has increased enormously in five-and-twenty years. It has grown more mercantile—is like Leeds mixed with Preston, and flavoured with New Brighton; but for smoke and fog you substitute an exquisitely bright light air. I found my rooms beautifully decorated (by Mrs. Fields) with choice flowers, and set off by a number of good books. I am not much persecuted by people in general, as Dolby has happily made up his mind that the less I am exhibited for nothing the better. So our men sit outside the room door and wrestle with mankind.

We had speech-making and singing in the saloon of the Cuba after the last dinner of the voyage. I think I have acquired a high reputation from drawing out the captain, and getting him to take the second in "All's Well," and likewise in "There's not in the wide world" (your parent taking first), than from anything previously known of me on these shores. I hope the effect of these achievements may not dim the lustre of the readings. We also sang (with a Chicago lady, and a strong-minded woman from I don't know where) "Auld Lang Syne," with a tender melancholy, expressive of having all four been united from our cradles. The more dismal we were, the

more delighted the company were. Once (when we paddled i' the burn) the captain took a little cruise round the compass on his own account, touching at the "Canadian Boat Song," and taking in supplies at "Jubilate," "Seas between us braid ha' roared," and roared like the seas themselves. Finally, I proposed the ladies in a speech that convulsed the stewards, and we closed with a brilliant success. Hilliard has just been in and sent his love "to those dear girls." He has grown much older. He is now District Attorney of the State of Massachusetts, which is a very good office. Best love to your aunt and Katie, and Charley and all his house, and all friends.

To Miss Hogarth.

Parker House, Boston,
Monday, Twenty-fifth November, 1867.

I cannot remember to whom I wrote last, but it will not much matter if I make a mistake; this being generally to report myself so well, that I am constantly chafing at not having begun to-night instead of this night week.

Dolby is over at New York, where we are at our wits' end how to keep tickets out of the hands of speculators. Morgan is staying with me; came yesterday to breakfast, and goes home to-morrow. Fields and Mrs. Fields also dined yesterday. She is a very nice woman with a rare relish for humour and a most contagious laugh. The Bostonians having been duly informed that I wish to be quiet, really leave me as much so as I should be in Manchester or Liverpool. This I cannot expect to last elsewhere; but it is a most welcome relief here, as I have all the readings to get up. The people are perfectly kind and perfectly agreeable. If I stop to look in at a shop-window, a score of passers-by stop; and after I begin to read, I cannot expect in the natural course of things to get off so easily. But I every day take from seven to ten miles in peace.

It is sad to see Longfellow's house (the house in which his wife was burnt) with his young daughters in it, and the shadow of that terrible story. The young undergraduates of Cambridge (he is a professor there) have made a representation to him that they are five hundred

strong and cannot get one ticket. I don't know what is to be done for them; I suppose I must read there somehow. We are all in the clouds until I shall have broken ground in New York, as to where readings will be possible, and where impossible.

Agassiz is one of the most natural and jovial of men. I go out a-visiting as little as I can, but still have to dine, and what is worse, sup pretty often. Socially, I am (as I was here before) wonderfully reminded of Edinburgh when I had many friends in it.

Your account and Mamie's of the return journey to London gave me great pleasure. I was delighted with your report of Wilkie, and not surprised by Chappell's coming out gallantly.

My anxiety to get to work is greater than I can express, because time seems to be making no movement towards home until I shall be reading hard. Then I shall begin to count and count and count the upward steps to May.

If ever you should be in a position to advise a traveller going on a sea voyage, remember that there is some mysterious service done to the bilious system when it is shaken, by baked apples. Noticing that they were produced on board the Cuba, every day at lunch and dinner, I thought I would make the experiment of always eating them freely. I am confident that they did wonders not only at the time, but in stopping the imaginary pitching and rolling after the voyage is over, from which many good amateur sailors suffer. I have hardly had the sensation at all, except in washing of a morning. At that time I still hold on with one knee to the washing-stand, and could swear that it rolls from left to right. The Cuba does not return until Wednesday, the Fourth December. You may suppose that every officer on board is coming on Monday, and that Dolby has provided extra stools for them.

To Charles Dickens, Jr.

Parker House, Boston, U.S.,
Saturday, Thirtieth November, 1867.

My dear Charley—You will have heard before now how fortunate I was on my voyage, and how I was not sick for a moment. These screws are tremendous ships for carrying on, and for rolling, and their vibration is

rather distressing. But my little cabin, being for'ard of the machinery, was in the best part of the vessel, and I had as much air in it, night and day, as I chose. The saloon being kept absolutely without air, I mostly dined in my own den, in spite of my being allotted the post of honour on the right hand of the captain.

The tickets for the first four readings here (the only readings announced) were all sold immediately. The tickets for the first four readings in New York (the only readings announced there also) were on sale yesterday, and were all sold in a few hours. Engagements of any kind and every kind I steadily refuse, being resolved to take what is to be taken myself. Dolby is nearly worked off his legs; nothing can exceed his energy and good humour, and he is extremely popular everywhere. My great desire is to avoid much travelling, and to try to get the people to come to me, instead of my going to them. If I can effect this to any moderate extent, I shall be saved a great deal of knocking about.

As they don't seem (Americans who have heard me on their travels excepted) to have the least idea here of what the readings are like, and as they are accustomed to mere readings out of a book, I am inclined to think the excitement will increase when I shall have begun. Everybody is very kind and considerate, and I have a number of old friends here, at the Bar and connected with the University. I am now negotiating to bring out the dramatic version of "No Thoroughfare" at New York. It is quite upon the cards that it may turn up trumps.

I was interrupted in that place by a call from my old secretary in the States, Mr. Putnam. It was quite affecting to see his delight in meeting his old master again. And when I told him that Anne was married, and that I had (unacknowledged) grandchildren, he laughed and cried together. I suppose you don't remember Longfellow, though he remembers you in a black velvet frock very well. He is now white-haired and white-bearded, but remarkably handsome. He still lives in his old house, where his beautiful wife was burnt to death. I dined with him the other day, and could not get the terrific scene out of my imagination. She was in a blaze in an instant, rushed into his arms with a wild cry, and never spoke afterwards.

My love to Bessie, and to Mekitty, and all the babbies. —Ever, my dear Charley, Your affectionate Father.

Tuesday, Third December, 1867.

Success last night beyond description or exaggeration. The whole city is quite frantic about it to-day, and it is impossible that prospects could be more brilliant.

To Miss Dickens.

Parker House, Boston, *Sunday, First December*, 1867.

I received yours of the Eighteenth November, yesterday. As I left Halifax in the Cuba that very day, you probably saw us telegraphed in the "Times" on the Nineteenth.

I think you had best in future (unless I give you intimation to the contrary) address your letters to me, at the Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York City. It is a more central position than this, and we are likely to be much more there than here. I am going to set up a brougham in New York, and keep my rooms at that hotel.

They are said to be a very quiet audience here, appreciative but not demonstrative. I shall try to change their character a little.

I have been going on very well. A horrible custom obtains in these parts of asking you to dinner somewhere at half-past two, and to supper somewhere else about eight. I have run this gauntlet more than once, and its effect is, that there is no day for any useful purpose, and that the length of the evening is multiplied by a hundred. Yesterday I dined with a club at half-past two, and came back here at half-past eight with a general impression that it was at least two o'clock in the morning. Two days before I dined with Longfellow at half-past two, and came back at eight, supposing it to be midnight. To-day we have a state dinner-party in our rooms at six, Mr. and Mrs. Fields, and Mr. and Mrs. Bigelow. (He is a friend of Forster's, and was American Minister in Paris.) There are no negro waiters here, all the servants are Irish—willing, but not able. The dinners and wines are very good. I keep our own rooms well ventilated by opening the windows, but no window is ever opened in the halls or passages, and they are so overheated by a great furnace,

that they make me faint and sick. The air is like that of a pre-Adamite ironing-day in full blast. Your respected parent is immensely popular in Boston society, and its cordiality and unaffected heartiness are charming. I wish I could carry it with me.

The leading New York papers have sent men over for to-morrow night with instructions to telegraph columns of descriptions. Great excitement and expectation everywhere. Fields says he has looked forward to it so long that he knows he will die at five minutes to eight.

At the New York barriers, where the tickets are on sale and the people ranged as at the Paris theatres, speculators went up and down offering "twenty dollars for anybody's place." The money was in no case accepted. One man sold two tickets for the second, third, and fourth night "for one ticket for the first, fifty dollars" (about seven pounds ten shillings) "and a brandy cocktail," which is an iced bitter drink. The weather has been rather muggy and languid until yesterday, when there was the coldest wind blowing that I ever felt. In the night it froze very hard, and to-day the sky is beautiful.

Tuesday, Third December.

Most magnificent reception last night, and most signal and complete success. Nothing could be more triumphant. The people will hear of nothing else and talk of nothing else. Nothing that was ever done here, they all agree, evoked any approach to such enthusiasm. I was quite as cool and quick as if I were reading at Greenwich, and went at it accordingly.

To Miss Dickens.

Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York City,
Wednesday, Eleventh December, 1867.

My dearest Mamie—Dolby sends you a few papers by this post. You will see from their tone what a success it is.

We are now selling (at the hall) the tickets for the four readings of next week. At nine o'clock this morning there were two thousand people in waiting, and they had begun to assemble in the bitter cold as early as two o'clock. All night long Dolby and our man have been stamping

tickets (immediately over my head, by the bye, and keeping me awake). This hotel is quite as quiet as Mivart's, in Brook Street. It is not very much larger. There are American hotels close by, with five hundred bedrooms, and I don't know how many boarders; but this is conducted on what is called "the European principle," and is an admirable mixture of a first-class French and English house. I keep a very smart carriage and pair; and if you were to behold me driving out, furred up to the moustache, with furs on the coach-boy and on the driver, and with an immense white, red, and yellow striped rug for a covering, you would suppose me to be of Hungarian or Polish nationality.

Dolby sends his kindest regards. He is just come in from our ticket sales, and has put such an immense untidy heap of paper money on the table that it looks like a family wash. He hardly ever dines, and is always tearing about at unreasonable hours.

My best love to your aunt (to whom I will write next), and to Katie, and to both the Charleys, and all the Christmas circle, not forgetting Chorley, to whom give my special remembrance. You may get this by Christmas Day. *We* shall have to keep it travelling from Boston here.

To Miss Hogarth.

Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York City,
Monday, Sixteenth December, 1867.

We have been snowed up here, and the communication with Boston is still very much retarded. Thus we have received no letters by the Cunard steamer that came in last Wednesday, and are in a grim state of mind on that subject.

Last night I was getting into bed just at twelve o'clock, when Dolby came to my door to inform me that the house was on fire (I had previously smelt fire for two hours). I got Scott up directly, told him to pack the books and clothes for the readings first, dressed, and pocketed my jewels and papers, while Dolby stuffed himself out with money. Meanwhile the police and firemen were in the house, endeavouring to find where the fire was. For some time it baffled their endeavours, but at last, bursting

out through some stairs, they cut the stairs away, and traced it to its source in a certain fire-grate. By this time the hose was laid all through the house from a great tank on the roof, and everybody turned out to help. It was the oddest sight, and people had put the strangest things on! After a little chopping and cutting with axes and handing about of water, the fire was confined to a dining-room in which it had originated, and then everybody talked to everybody else, the ladies being particularly loquacious and cheerful. And so we got to bed again at about two.

The excitement of the readings continues unabated. They are a wonderfully fine audience, even better than Edinburgh, and almost, if not quite, as good as Paris.

Dolby continues to be the most unpopular man in America (mainly because he can't get four thousand people into a room that holds two thousand), and is reviled in print daily. Yesterday morning a newspaper proclaims of him: "Surely it is time that the pudding-headed Dolby retired into the native gloom from which he has emerged." He takes it very coolly, and does his best. Mrs. Morgan sent me, the other night, I suppose the finest and costliest basket of flowers ever seen, made of white camellias, yellow roses, pink roses, and I don't know what else. It is a yard and a half round at its smallest part.

To Miss Hogarth.

Boston, *Sunday, Twenty-second December*, 1867.

Coming here from New York last night (after a detestable journey), I was delighted to find your letter of the sixth. I read it at my ten-o'clock dinner with the greatest interest and pleasure, and then we talked of home till we went to bed.

When we got here last Saturday night, we found that Mrs. Fields had not only garnished the rooms with flowers, but also with holly (with real red berries) and festoons of moss dependent from the looking-glasses and picture frames. She is one of the dearest little women in the world. The homely Christmas look of the place quite affected us. Yesterday we dined at her house, and there was a plum-pudding, brought on blazing, and not to be surpassed in any house in England. There is a certain

Captain Dolliver, belonging to the Boston Custom House, who came off in the little steamer that brought me ashore from the Cuba. He took it into his head that he would have a piece of English mistletoe brought out in this week's Cunard, which should be laid upon my breakfast-table. And there it was this morning. In such affectionate touches as this, these New England people are especially amiable.

As a general rule, you may lay it down that whatever you see about me in the papers is not true. But although my voyage out was of that highly hilarious description that you first made known to me, you may *generally* lend a more believing ear to the Philadelphia correspondent of the "Times." I don't know him, but I know the source from which he derives his information, and it is a very respectable one.

Did I tell you in a former letter from here, to tell Anne, with her old master's love, that I had seen Putnam, my old secretary? Grey, and with several front teeth out, but I would have known him anywhere. He is coming to "Copperfield" to-night, accompanied by his wife and daughter, and is in the seventh heaven at having his tickets given him.

Our hotel in New York was on fire *again* the other night. But fires in this country are quite matters of course. There was a large one there at four this morning, and I don't think a single night has passed, since I have been under the protection of the Eagle,* but I have heard the fire-bells dolefully clanging all over the city.

My love to all, and to Mrs. Hulkes and the boy. By the bye, when we left New York for this place, Dolby called my amazed attention to the circumstance that Scott was leaning his head against the side of the carriage and weeping bitterly. I asked him what was the matter, and he replied: "The owdacious treatment of the luggage, which was more outrageous than a man could bear." I told him not to make a fool of himself; but they do knock it about cruelly. I think every trunk we have is already broken.

I must leave off, as I am going out for a walk in a

* Eagle fire insurance office.—Ed.

bright sunlight and a complete break-up of the frost and snow. I am much better than I have been during the last week, but have a cold.

To Miss Dickens.

Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York City,
Thursday, Twenty-sixth December, 1867.

My dearest Mamie—I got your aunt's last letter at Boston yesterday, Christmas Day morning, when I was starting at eleven o'clock to come back to this place. I wanted it very much, for I had a frightful cold (English colds are nothing to those of this country) and was exceedingly depressed and miserable. Not that I had any reason but illness for being so, since the Bostonians had been quite astounding in their demonstrations. I never saw anything like them on Christmas Eve. But it is a bad country to be unwell and travelling in; you are one of say a hundred people in a heated car, with a great stove in it, and all the little windows closed, and the hurrying and banging about are indescribable. The atmosphere is detestable, and the motion often all but intolerable. However, we got our dinner here at eight o'clock, and plucked up a little, and I made some hot gin punch to drink a merry Christmas to all at home in. But it must be confessed that we were both very dull. I have been in bed all day until two o'clock, and here I am now (at three o'clock) a little better. But I am not fit to read, and I must read to-night. After watching the general character pretty closely, I became quite sure that Dolby was wrong on the length of the stay and the number of readings we had proposed in this place. I am quite certain that it is one of the national peculiarities that what they want must be difficult of attainment. I therefore a few days ago made a *coup d'état*, and altered the whole scheme. There has been a great storm here for a few days, and the streets, though wet, are becoming passable again. Dolby and Osgood are out in it to-day on a variety of business, and left in grave and solemn state. Scott and the gasman are stricken with dumb concern, not having received one single letter from home since they left. What their wives can have done with the letters they take it for granted they have written is

the stormy speculation at the door of my hall dressing-room every night.

If I do not send a letter to Katie by this mail, it will be because I shall probably be obliged to go across the water to Brooklyn to-morrow to see a church,* in which it is proposed that I shall read! ! ! Horrible visions of being put in the pulpit already beset me. And whether the audience will be in pews is another consideration which greatly disturbs my mind. No paper ever comes out without a leader on Dolby, who of course reads them all, and never can understand why I don't, in which is he called all the bad names in (and not in) the language.

We always call him P. H. Dolby now, in consequence of one of these graceful specimens of literature describing him as the "pudding-headed."

I fear that when we travel he will have to be always before me, so that I may not see him six times in as many weeks. However, I shall have done a fourth of the whole this very next week!

Friday.

I managed to read last night, but it was as much as I could do. To-day I am so very unwell, that I have sent for a doctor; he has just been, and is in doubt whether I shall not have to stop reading for a while.

To Miss Dickens.

Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York.
Monday, Thirtieth December, 1867.

I am getting all right again. I have not been well, been very low, and have been obliged to have a doctor; a very agreeable fellow † indeed, who soon turned out to be an old friend of Olliffe's. He has set me on my legs and taken his leave "professionally," though he means to give me a call now and then.

No news here. All going on in the regular way. I read in that church I told you of, about the middle of January. It is wonderfully seated for two thousand people, and is as easy to speak in as if they were two hundred. The people are seated in pews, and we let the

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* Plymouth Church.—Ed. † Dr. Fordyce Barker.—Ed.

pews. I stand on a small platform from which the pulpit will be removed for the occasion!! I emerge from the vestry!!! On Friday next I shall have read a fourth of my whole list, besides having had twelve days' holiday when I first came out. So please God I shall soon get to the half, and so begin to work hopefully round.

I suppose you were at the Adelphi on Thursday night last. Nothing is being played here scarcely that is not founded on my books—"Cricket," "Oliver Twist," "Our Mutual Friend," and I don't know what else, every night. I can't get down Broadway for my own portrait; and yet I live almost as quietly in this hotel, as if I were at the office, and go in and out by a side door just as I might there.

I shall be curious to know who were at Gad's Hill on Christmas Day, and how you (as they say in this country) "got along." It is exceedingly cold here again, after two or three quite spring days.

Ever your affectionate Father.

To Miss Hogarth.

Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York,
Friday, Third January, 1868.

My dearest Georgy—To-night, I read out the first quarter of my list. It seems impossible to devise any scheme for getting the tickets into the people's hands without the intervention of speculators. The people *will not* help themselves; and, of course, the speculators and all other such prowlers throw as great obstacles in Dolby's way (an Englishman's) as they possibly can. He may be a little injudicious into the bargain. Last night, for instance, he met one of the "ushers" (who show people to their seats) coming in with Kelly. It is against orders that any one employed in front should go out during the readings, and he took this man to task in the British manner. Instantly the free and independent usher put on his hat and walked off. Seeing which, all the other free and independent ushers (some twenty in number) put on *their* hats and walked off, leaving us absolutely devoid and destitute of a staff for to-night. One has since been improvised; but it was a small matter to

raise a stir and ill will about, especially as one of our men was equally in fault.

We have a regular clerk, a Bostonian, whose name is Wild. He, Osgood, Dolby, Kelly, Scott, George the gas-man, and perhaps a boy or two, constitute my body-guard. It seems a large number of people, but the business cannot be done with fewer. The speculators buying the front seats to sell at a premium (and we have found instances of this being done by merchants in good position!), and the public perpetually pitching into Dolby for selling them back seats, the result is that they won't have the back seats, send back their tickets, write and print volumes on the subject, and deter others from coming.

Tell Plorn, with my love, that I think he will find himself much interested at that college,* and that it is very likely he may make some acquaintances there that will hereafter be pleasant and useful to him. Sir Sydney Dacres is the best of friends. I have a letter from Mrs. Hulkes by this post, wherein the boy encloses a violet, now lying on the table before me. Let her know that it arrived safely, and retaining its colour. I took it for granted that Mary would have asked Chorley for Christmas Day, and am very glad she ultimately did so. I am sorry that Harry lost his prize, but believe it was not his fault. Let *him* know *that*, with my love. I would have written to him by this mail in answer to his, but for other occupation. Did I tell you that my landlord made me a drink (brandy, rum, and snow the principal ingredients) called a "Rocky Mountain sneezer"? Or that the favourite drink before you get up is an "eye-opener"? Or that Roberts (second landlord), no sooner saw me on the night of the first fire, than, with his property blazing, he insisted on taking me down into a roomful of hot smoke to drink brandy-and-water with him? We have not been on fire again, by the bye, more than once.

There has been another fall of snow, succeeded by a heavy thaw. I have laid down my sledge, and taken up my carriage again in consequence. I am nearly all right, but cannot get rid of an intolerable cold in the head. No more news.

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* The Agricultural College, Cirencester.—Ed.

To Miss Hogarth.

Parker House, Boston, U.S., *Fourth January*, 1868.

I write to you by this opportunity, though I really have nothing to tell you. The work is hard and the climate is hard. We made a tremendous hit last night with "Nickleby" and "Boots," which the Bostonians certainly on the whole appreciate more than "Copperfield"! Dolby's business at night is a mere nothing, for these people are so accustomed to take care of themselves, that one of these immense audiences will fall into their places with an ease amazing to a frequenter of St. James's Hall. And the certainty with which they are all in, before I go on, is a very acceptable mark of respect. I must add, too, that although there is a conventional familiarity in the use of one's name in the newspapers as "Dickens," "Charlie," and what not, I do not in the least see that familiarity in the writers themselves. An inscrutable tone obtains in journalism, which a stranger cannot understand. If I say in common courtesy to one of them, when Dolby introduces, "I am much obliged to you for your interest in me," or so forth, he seems quite shocked, and has a bearing of perfect modesty and propriety. I am rather inclined to think that they suppose their printed tone to be the public's love of smartness, but it is immensely difficult to make out. All I can as yet make out is, that my perfect freedom from bondage, and at any moment to go on or leave off, or otherwise do as I like, is the only safe position to occupy.

Again; there are two apparently irreconcilable contrasts here. Down below in this hotel every night are the bar loungers, dram drinkers, drunkards, swaggerers, loafers, that one might find in a Boucicault play. Within half an hour is Cambridge, where a delightful domestic life—simple, self-respectful, cordial, and affectionate—is seen in an admirable aspect. All New England is primitive and puritanical. All about and around it is a puddle of mixed human mud, with no such quality in it. Perhaps I may in time sift out some tolerably intelligible whole, but I certainly have not done so yet. It is a good sign, may be, that it all seems immensely more difficult to understand than it was when I was here before.

Felton left two daughters. I have only seen the eld-

est, a very sensible, frank, pleasant girl of eight-and-twenty, perhaps, rather like him in the face. A striking-looking daughter of Hawthorne's (who is also dead) came into my room last night. The day has slipped on to three o'clock, hence this sudden break off.

Ever affectionately.

To Miss Dickens.

Philadelphia, *Monday, Thirteenth January*, 1868.

My dearest Mamie—I write you this note, a day* later than your aunt's, not because I have anything to add to the little I have told her, but because you may like to have it.

We arrived here last night towards twelve o'clock, more than an hour after our time. This is one of the immense American hotels (it is called the Continental); but I find myself just as quiet here as elsewhere. Everything is very good indeed, the waiter is German, and the greater part of the house servants seem to be coloured people. The town is very clean, and the day is as blue and bright as a fine Italian day. But it freezes very hard. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, with a couple of servants, and a pretty little child-daughter, were in the train each night, and I talked with them a good deal. They are reported to have made an enormous fortune by acting among the Californian gold-diggers. My cold is no better, for the cars are so intolerably hot, that I was often obliged to go and stand upon the break outside, and then the frosty air was biting indeed. The great man of this place is one Mr. Childs,† a newspaper proprietor, who was waiting for me at the station (always called depôt here) with his carriage.

I was very much interested in the home accounts of Christmas Day. I think I have already mentioned that we were in very low spirits on that day. I began to be unwell with my cold that morning, and a long day's travel did not mend the matter. We scarcely spoke (except when we ate our lunch), and sat dolefully staring out of window. I had a few affectionate words from

* He had written on January 12th to Miss Hogarth.

† George William Childs, the publisher and philanthropist.—Ed.

Chorley, dated from my room, on Christmas morning, and will write him, probably by this mail, a brief acknowledgment. I find it necessary (so oppressed am I with this American catarrh, as they call it) to dine at three o'clock instead of four, that I may have more time to get voice, so that the days are short and letter-writing is not easy.

If I could only get to the point of being able to hold my head up and dispense with my pocket-handkerchief for five minutes, I should be all right.

To Charles Dickens, Jr.

Westminster Hotel, Irving Place, New York,
Wednesday, Fifteenth January, 1868.

My dear Charley—Finding your letter here this afternoon on my return from Philadelphia (where I have been reading two nights), I take advantage of a spare half-hour in which to answer it at once. . . . I have not been very well generally, and am oppressed (and I begin to think that I probably shall be until I leave) by a true American cold, which I hope, for the comfort of human nature, may be peculiar to only one of the four quarters of the world. The work, too, is very severe. But I am going on at the same tremendous rate everywhere. "Doctor Marigold" made a great hit here, and is looked forward to at Boston with special interest. I go to Boston for another fortnight, on end, the twenty-fourth of February. The railway journeys distress me greatly. I get out into the open air (upon the break), and it snows and blows, and the train bumps, and the steam flies at me, until I am driven in again.

I will not pass my original bound of eighty-four readings in all. My mind was made up as to that long ago. It will be quite enough. What with travelling, and getting ready for reading, and reading, the days are pretty fully occupied. Not the less so because I rest very indifferently at night.

The people are exceedingly kind and considerate, and desire to be most hospitable besides. But I cannot accept hospitality, and never go out, except at Boston, or I should not be fit for the labour. When Dolby leaves me, Osgood has to go into the hall from the platform

door every night, and see how the public are seating themselves. It is very odd to see how hard he finds it to look a couple of thousand people in the face, on which head, by the bye, I notice the papers to take "Mr. Dickens's extraordinary composure" (their great phrase) rather ill, and on the whole to imply that it would be taken as a suitable compliment if I would stagger on to the platform and instantly drop, overpowered by the spectacle before me.

Dinner is announced (by Scott, with a stiff neck and a sore throat), and I must break off with love to Bessie and the incipient Wenerableses. You will be glad to hear of your distinguished parent that Philadelphia has discovered that "he is not like the descriptions we have read of him at the little red desk. He is not at all foppish in appearance. He wears a heavy moustache and a Vandyke beard, and looks like a well-to-do Philadelphian gentleman."—Ever, my dear Charley,

Your affectionate Father.

To Miss Dickens.

Philadelphia, *Thursday, Twenty-third January*, 1868.

When I wrote to your aunt by the last mail, I accidentally omitted to touch upon the question of helping Anne. So I will begin in this present writing with reference to her sad position. I think it will be best for you to be guided by an exact knowledge of her *wants*. Try to ascertain from herself what means she has, whether her sick husband gets what he ought to have, whether she is pinched in the articles of necessary clothing, bedding, or the like of that; add to this intelligence your own observation of the state of things about her, and supply what she most wants, and help her where you find the greatest need. The question, in the case of so old and faithful a servant, is not one of so much or so little money on my side, but how *most efficiently* to ease her mind and help *her*. To do this at once kindly and sensibly is the only consideration by which you have to be guided. Take *carte blanche* from me for all the rest.

My Washington week is the first week in February, beginning on Monday, third. The tickets are sold, and the President is coming, and the chief members of the

Cabinet, and the leaders of parties, and so forth, are coming; and, as the Holly Tree Boots says: "That's where it is, don't you see!"

We are not a bit too soon here, for the whole country is beginning to be stirred and shaken by the presidential election, and trade is exceedingly depressed, and will be more so. Fanny Kemble lives near this place, but had gone away a day before my first visit here. *She* is going to read in February or March. Du Chaillu has been lecturing out West about the gorilla, and has been to see me: I saw the Cunard steamer Persia out in the stream, yesterday, beautifully smart, her flags flying, all her steam up, and she only waiting for her mails to slip away. She gave me a horrible touch of home-sickness.

When the First of March arrives, and I can say "next month," I shall begin to grow brighter. A fortnight's reading in Boston, too, will help me on gaily, I hope (the work so far off tells). It is impossible for two people to be more affectionately attached to a third, I really believe, than Fields and his wife are to me; and they are a landmark in the prospect.

To Miss Hogarth.

Baltimore, *Wednesday, Twenty-ninth January*, 1868.

As I have an hour to spare, before starting to Philadelphia, I begin my letter this morning. It has been snowing hard for four-and-twenty hours, though this place is as far south as Valentia in Spain.

They are a bright responsive people here, and very pleasant to read to. I have rarely seen so many fine faces in an audience. I read here in a charming little opera-house built by a society of Germans, quite a delightful place for the purpose. I stand on the stage, with a drop-curtain down, and my screen before it. The whole scene is very pretty and complete, and the audience have a "ring" in them that sounds in the ear. Distances and travelling have obliged us to reduce the list of readings by two, leaving eighty-two in all. Of course we afterwards discovered that we had finally settled the list on a Friday! I shall be halfway through it at Washington, of course, on a Friday also, and my birthday!

Dolby and Osgood, who do the most ridiculous things

to keep me in spirits (I am often very heavy, and rarely sleep much), have decided to have a walking-match at Boston, on Saturday, Twenty-ninth February. Beginning this design in Joke, they have become tremendously in earnest, and Dolby has actually sent home (much to his opponent's terror) for a pair of seamless socks to walk in. Our men are hugely excited on the subject, and continually make bets on "the men." Fields and I are to walk out six miles, and "the men" are to turn and walk round us. Neither of them has the least idea what twelve miles at a pace is. Being requested by both to give them "a breather" yesterday, I gave them a stiff one of five miles over a bad road in the snow, half the distance uphill. I took them at a pace of four miles and a half an hour, and you never beheld such objects as they were when we got back; both smoking like factories, and both obliged to change everything before they could come to dinner. They have the absurdest ideas of what are tests of walking power, and continually get up in the maddest manner and see *how high they can kick* the wall! The wainscot here, in one place, is scored all over with their pencil-marks. To see them doing this—Dolby, a big man, and Osgood, a very little one, is ridiculous beyond description.

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To Samuel Cartwright.

Baltimore, *Wednesday, Twenty-ninth January*, 1868.

My dear Cartwright—As I promised to report myself to you from this side of the Atlantic, and as I have some leisure this morning, I am going to lighten my conscience by keeping my word.

I am going on at a great pace and with immense success. Next week, at Washington, I shall, please God, have got through half my readings. The remaining half are all arranged, and they will carry me into the third week of April. It is very hard work, but it is brilliantly paid. The changes that I find in the country generally (this place is the least changed of any I have yet seen) exceed my utmost expectations. I had been in New York a couple of days before I began to recognise it at all; and the handsomest part of Boston was a black swamp when

I saw it five-and-twenty years ago. Considerable advances, too, have been made socially.

One of the most comical spectacles I have ever seen in my life was "church," with a heavy sea on, in the saloon of the Cunard steamer coming out. The officiating minister, an extremely modest young man, was brought in between two big stewards, exactly as if he were coming up to the scratch in a prize-fight. The ship was rolling and pitching so, that the two big stewards had to stop and watch their opportunity of making a dart at the reading-desk with their reverend charge, during which pause he held on, now by one steward and now by the other, with the feeblest expression of countenance and no legs whatever. At length they made a dart at the wrong moment, and one steward was immediately beheld alone in the extreme perspective, while the other and the reverend gentleman *held on by the mast* in the middle of the saloon—which the latter embraced with both arms, as if it were his wife. All this time the congregation was breaking up into sects and sliding away; every sect (as in nature) pounding the other sect. And when at last the reverend gentleman had been tumbled into his place, the desk (a loose one, put upon the dining-table) deserted from the church bodily, and went over to the purser. The scene was so extraordinarily ridiculous, and was made so much more so by the exemplary gravity of all concerned in it, that I was obliged to leave before the service began.

This is one of the places where Butler carried it with so high a hand in the war, and where the ladies used to spit when they passed a Northern soldier. It still wears, I fancy, a look of sullen remembrance. (The ladies are remarkably handsome, with an Eastern look upon them, dress with a strong sense of colour, and make a brilliant audience.) The ghost of slavery haunts the houses; and the old, untidy, incapable, lounging, shambling black serves you as a free man. Free of course he ought to be; but the stupendous absurdity of making him a voter glares out of every roll of his eye, stretch of his mouth, and bump of his head. I have a strong impression that the race must fade out of the States very fast. It never can hold its own against a striving, restless, shifty people. In the penitentiary here, the other day, in a room full of

all blacks (too dull to be taught any of the work in hand), was one young brooding fellow, very like a black rhinoceros. He sat glowering at life, as if it were just endurable at dinner time, until four of his fellows began to sing, most unmelodiously, a part song. He then set up a dismal howl, and pounded his face on a form. I took him to have been rendered quite desperate by having learnt anything. I send my kind regard to Mrs. Cartwright, and sincerely hope that she and you have no new family distresses or anxieties. I am always, my dear Cartwright,

Cordially yours.

To W. Wilkie Collins.

Philadelphia, *Thirty-first January*, 1868.

My dear Wilkie—Your letter, dated on the eleventh, reached me here this morning. Mine will be brief, as it must go on to New York presently, and there is much snow on the Line. . . . Wherever I go they play my books, with my name in big letters. "Oliver Twist" was at Baltimore when I left it last Wednesday. "Pickwick" is here, and "Dot and the Carrier" are here. "Pickwick" was at New York too when I last passed that way; so was "Our Mutual Friend"; so was "No Thoroughfare."

We are getting now among smaller halls, but the audiences are immense. "Marigold" here last night (for the first time) bowled Philadelphia clean over. I go on to Washington to-morrow morning, and shall be halfway through my Readings on Friday, my birthday. God bless you. Ever affectionately.

To Miss Dickens.

Philadelphia, *Friday, Thirty-first January*, 1868.

My dearest Mamie—From a letter Wilkie has written to me, it seems there can be no doubt that the "No Thoroughfare" drama is a real, genuine, and great success. It is drawing immensely, and seems to "go" with great effect and applause.

"Doctor Marigold" here last night (for the first time) was an immense success, and all Philadelphia is going to rush at once for tickets for the two Philadelphian fare-

wells the week after next. The tickets are to be sold to-morrow, and great excitement is anticipated in the streets. Dolby not being here, a clerk will sell, and will probably wish himself dead before he has done with it.

It appears to me that Chorley writes to you on the legacy question because he wishes you to understand that there is no danger of his changing his mind, and at the bottom I descry an honest desire to pledge himself as strongly as possible. You may receive it in that better spirit, or I am much mistaken. I am now going out in a sleigh (and four) with unconceivable dignity and grandeur.

Third February, 1868.

* Articles of Agreement entered into at Baltimore, in the United States of America, this Third day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight, between George Dolby, British subject, *alias* the Man of Ross, and James R. Osgood, American citizen, *alias* the Boston Bantam.

Whereas, some Bounce having arisen between the above men in reference to feats of pedestrianism and agility, they have agreed to settle their differences and prove who is the better man, by means of a walking-match for two hats a side and the glory of their respective countries; and whereas they agree that the said match shall come off, whatsoever the weather, on the Mill Dam Road outside Boston, on Saturday, the twenty-ninth day of this present month; and whereas they agree that the personal attendants on themselves during the whole walk, and also the umpires and starters and declarers of victory in the match shall be James T. Fields of Boston, known in sporting circles as Massachusetts Jemmy, and Charles Dickens of Falstaff's Gad's Hill, whose surprising performances (without the least variation) on that truly national instrument, the American catarrh, have won for him the well-merited title of the Gad's Hill Gasper:

1. The men are to be started, on the day appointed, by Massachusetts Jemmy and The Gasper.

2. Jemmy and The Gasper are, on some previous day,

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* It was at Baltimore that Dickens first conceived the idea of a walking-match, which should take place on his return to Boston, and he drew up a set of humorous "articles."—Ed.

to walk out at the rate of not less than four miles an hour by The Gasper's watch, for one hour and a half. At the expiration of that one hour and a half they are to carefully note the place at which they halt. On the match's coming off they are to station themselves in the middle of the road, at that precise point, and the men (keeping clear of them and of each other) are to turn round them, right shoulder inward, and walk back to the starting point. The man declared by them to pass the starting point first is to be the victor and the winner of the match.

3. No jostling or fouling allowed.

4. All cautions or orders issued to the men by the umpires, starters, and declarers of victory to be considered final and admitting of no appeal.

5. A sporting narrative of the match to be written by The Gasper within one week after its coming off, and the same to be duly printed (at the expense of the subscribers to these articles) on a broadside. The said broadside to be framed and glazed, and one copy of the same to be carefully preserved by each of the subscribers to these articles.

6. The men to show on the evening of the day of walking at six o'clock precisely, at the Parker House, Boston, when and where a dinner will be given them by The Gasper. The Gasper to occupy the chair, faced by Massachusetts Jemmy. The latter promptly and formally to invite, as soon as may be after the date of these presents, the following guests to honour the said dinner with their presence; that is to say [here follow the names of a few of his friends, whom he wished to be invited].

Now, lastly. In token of their accepting the trusts and offices by these articles conferred upon them, these articles are solemnly and formally signed by Massachusetts Jemmy and by the Gad's Hill Gasper, as well as by the men themselves.

Signed by the Man of Ross, otherwise George Dolby.
Signed by the Boston Bantam, otherwise James R. Osgood.
Signed by Massachusetts Jemmy, otherwise James T. Fields.
Signed by the Gad's Hill Gasper, otherwise Charles Dickens.

To Charles Lanman.

Washington, *Fifth February*, 1868.

My dear Sir—Allow me to thank you most cordially for your kind letter, and for its accompanying books. I have a particular love for books of travel, and shall wander into the "Wilds of America" with great interest. I have also received your charming Sketch ["Autumnal Foliage in America"] with great pleasure and admiration. Let me thank you for it heartily. As a beautiful suggestion of nature associated with this country, it shall have a quiet place on the walls of my house as long as I live.

Your reference to my dear friend Washington Irving renews the vivid impressions reawakened in my mind at Baltimore the other day. I saw his fine face for the last time in that city. He came there from New York to pass a day or two with me before I went westward, and they were made among the most memorable of my life by his delightful fancy and genial humour. Some unknown admirer of his books and mine sent to the hotel a most enormous mint julep, wreathed with flowers. We sat, one on either side of it, with great solemnity, but the solemnity was of very short duration. It was quite an enchanted julep, and carried us among innumerable people and places that we both knew. The julep held out far into the night, and my memory never saw him afterward otherwise than as bending over it, with his straw, with an attempted gravity (after some anecdote, involving some wonderfully droll and delicate observation of character), and then, as his eyes caught mine, melting into that captivating laugh of his which was the brightest and best I have ever heard.—Dear Sir, with many thanks,

Faithfully yours.

To Miss Dickens.

Baltimore, U.S., *Tuesday, Eleventh February*, 1868.

The weather has been desperately severe, and my cold quite as bad as ever. I couldn't help laughing at myself on my birthday at Washington. It was observed as much as though I were a little boy. Flowers and garlands (of the most exquisite kind) bloomed all over the

room; letters radiant with good wishes poured in; a shirt pin, a handsome silver travelling bottle, a set of gold shirt studs, and a set of gold sleeve links were on the dinner table. After "Boots," at night, the whole audience rose and remained (Secretaries of State, President's family, Judges of Supreme Court, and so forth) standing and cheering until I went back to the table and made them a little speech. On the same august day of the year I was received by the President, a man with a very remarkable and determined face. Each of us looked at each other very hard, and each of us managed the interview (I think) to the satisfaction of the other. In the outer room was sitting a certain sunburnt General Blair, with many evidences of the war upon him. He got up to shake hands with me, and then I found he had been out in the prairie with me five-and-twenty years ago. That afternoon my "catarrh" was in such a state that Charles Sumner, coming in at five o'clock and finding me covered with mustard poultice, and apparently voiceless, turned to Dolby and said: "Surely, Mr. Dolby, it is impossible that he can read to-night." Says Dolby: "Sir, I have told the dear Chief so four times to-day, and I have been very anxious. But you have no idea how he will change when he gets to the little table." After five minutes of the little table, I was not (for the time) even hoarse. The frequent experience of this return of force when it is wanted saves me a vast amount of anxiety.

Think of my dreaming of Mrs. Bouncer each night! ! !

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To Miss Hogarth.

Philadelphia, *Thursday, Thirteenth February*, 1868.

My dearest Georgy—Nothing will induce the people to believe in the farewells. At Baltimore on Tuesday night (a very brilliant night indeed), they asked as they came out: "When will Mr. Dickens read here again?" "Never." "Nonsense! Not come back, after such houses as these? Come. Say when he'll read again." Just the same here. We could as soon persuade them that I am the President, as that I am going to read here for the last time to-morrow night.

There is a child of the Barney Williams's in this house —a little girl—to whom I presented a black doll when I was here last. I have seen her eye at the keyhole since I began writing this, and I think she and the doll are outside still. "When you sent it up to me by the coloured boy," she said after receiving it (coloured boy is the term for black waiter), "I gave such a cream that ma came running in and creamed too, 'cos she fort I'd hurt myself. But I creamed a cream of joy." She had a friend to play with her that day, and brought the friend with her, to my infinite confusion. A friend all stockings, and much too tall, who sat on the sofa very far back, with her stockings sticking stiffly out in front of her, and glared at me and never spake word. Dolby found us confronted in a sort of fascination, like serpent and bird.

To Miss Hogarth.

New York, *Monday, Seventeenth February*, 1868.

"True American" still sticking to me. But I am always ready for my work, and therefore don't much mind. Dolby and the Mayor of New Haven alternately embrace and exchange mortal defiances. In writing out some advertisements towards midnight last night, he made a very good mistake. "The reading will be comprised within two *minutes*, and the audience are earnestly entreated to be seated ten *hours* before its commencement."

The weather has been finer lately, but the streets are in a horrible condition, through half-melted snow, and it is now snowing again. The walking-match (next Saturday week) is already in the Boston papers! I suppose half Boston will turn out on the occasion. As a sure way of not being conspicuous, "the men" are going to walk in flannel! They are in a mingled state of comicality and gravity about it that is highly ridiculous. Yesterday being a bright cool day, I took Dolby for a "buster" of eight miles. As everybody here knows me, the spectacle of our splitting up the fashionable avenue (the only way out of town) excited the greatest amazement. No doubt *that* will be in the papers to-morrow. I give a gorgeous banquet to eighteen (ladies and gentlemen) after the match. Mr. and Mrs. Fields, Do. Ticknor, Longfellow

and his daughter, Lowell, Holmes and his wife, etc. etc. Sporting speeches to be made, and the stakes (four hats) to be handed over to the winner.

My ship will not be the Cuba after all. She is to go into dock, and the Russia (a larger ship, and the latest built for the Cunard line) is to take her place.

* * * * * *

To Charles Fechter.

Washington, *Twenty-fourth February*, 1868.

My dear Fechter—Your letter reached me here yesterday.

My dear fellow, consider yourself my representative. Whatever you do, or desire to do, about the play, I fully authorise beforehand. Tell Webster, with my regard, that I think his proposal honest and fair; that I think it, in a word, like himself; and that I have perfect confidence in his good faith and liberality.

As to making money of the play in the United States here, Boucicault has filled Wilkie's head with golden dreams that have *nothing* in them. He makes no account of the fact that, wherever I go, the theatres (with my name in big letters) instantly begin playing versions of my books, and that the moment the Christmas number came over here they pirated and played "No Thoroughfare." Now, I have enquired into the law, and am extremely doubtful whether I *could* have prevented this. Why should they pay for the piece as you act it, when they have no actors, and when all they want is my name, and they can get that for nothing.

Wilkie has uniformly written of you enthusiastically. In a letter I had from him, dated the Tenth of January, he described your conception and execution of the part in the most glowing terms. "Here Fechter is magnificent." "Here his superb playing brings the house down." "I should call even his exit in the last act one of the subtlest and finest things he does in the piece." "You can hardly imagine what he gets out of the part, or what he makes of his passionate love for Marguerite." These expressions, and many others like them, crowded his letter.

I never did so want to see a character played on the stage as I want to see you play Obenreizer. As the play

was going when I last heard of it, I have some hopes that I MAY see it yet. Please God, your Adelphi dressing-room will be irradiated with the noble presence of "Never Wrong" (if you are acting), about the evening of Monday, the Fourth of May!

I am doing enormous business. It is a wearying life, away from all I love, but I hope that the time will soon begin to spin away. Among the many changes that I find here is the comfortable change that the people are in general extremely considerate, and very observant of my privacy. Generally, they are very good audiences indeed. They do not (I think) perceive touches of art to *be* art; but they are responsive to the broad results of such touches. "Doctor Marigold" is a great favourite, and they laugh so unrestrainedly at "The Trial" from "Pickwick" (which you never heard), that it has grown about half as long again as it used to be.

If I could send you a "brandy cocktail" by post I would. It is a highly meritorious dram, which I hope to present to you at Gad's. My New York landlord made me a "Rocky Mountain sneezer," which appeared to me to be compounded of all the spirits ever heard of in the world, with bitters, lemon, sugar, and snow. You can only make a true "sneezer" when the snow is lying on the ground.

There, my dear boy, my paper is out, and I am going to read "Copperfield." Count always on my fidelity and true attachment, and look out, as I have already said, for a distinguished visitor about Monday, the Fourth of May.—Ever, my dear Fechter,

Your cordial and affectionate Friend.

To Miss Hogarth.

Boston, *Thursday, Twenty-seventh February*, 1868.

I have very little news to give you in return for your budget. The walking-match is to come off on Saturday, and Fields and I went over the ground yesterday to measure the miles. We went at a tremendous pace. The condition of the ground is something indescribable, from half-melted snow, running water, and sheets and blocks of ice. The two performers have not the faintest notion of the weight of the task they have undertaken.

In the first excitement of the presidential impeachment, our houses instantly went down. Nothing in this country lasts long, and I think the public may be heartily tired of the President's name by the Ninth of March, when I read at a considerable distance from here. So behold me with a whole week's holiday in view! The Boston audiences have come to regard the readings and their reader as their peculiar property; and you would be at once amused and pleased if you could see the curious way in which they seem to plume themselves on both. They have taken to applauding too whenever they laugh or cry, and the result is very inspiriting. I shall remain here until Saturday, the Seventh, but shall not read here, after to-morrow night, until the First of April, when I begin my Boston farewells, six in number.

Friday, Twenty-eighth.

It has been snowing all night, and the city is in a miserable condition. We had a fine house last night, for "Carol" and "Trial," and such an enthusiastic one that they persisted in a call after the "Carol," and, while I was out, covered the little table with flowers. There is a lull in the excitement about the President, but the articles of impeachment are to be produced this afternoon, and then it may set in again. Osgood came into camp last night from selling in remote places, and reports that at Rochester and Buffalo (both places near the frontier), Canada people bought tickets, who had struggled across the frozen river and clambered over all sorts of obstructions to get them. Some of these halls turn out to be smaller than represented, but I have no doubt, to use an American expression, that we shall "get along."

To-morrow fortnight we purpose being at the Falls of Niagara, and then we shall turn back and really begin to wind up. I have got to know the "Carol" so well that I can't remember it, and occasionally go dodging about in the wildest manner to pick up lost pieces. They took it so tremendously last night that I was stopped every five minutes. One poor young girl in mourning burst into a passion of grief about Tiny Tim, and was taken out. This is all my news.

Each of the pedestrians is endeavouring to persuade the other to take something unwholesome before starting.

To Miss Dickens.

Boston, *Monday, Second March,* 1868.

A heavy gale of wind and a snowstorm oblige me to write suddenly for the Cunard steamer a day earlier than usual. The railroad between this and New York will probably be stopped somewhere. After all the hard weather we have had, this is the worst day we have seen.

The walking-match came off on Saturday, over tremendously difficult ground, against a biting wind, and through deep snow-wreaths. It was so cold, too, that our hair, beards, eyelashes, eyebrows, were frozen hard, and hung with icicles. The course was thirteen miles. They were close together at the turning-point, when Osgood went ahead at a splitting pace and with extraordinary endurance, and won by half a mile. Dolby did very well indeed, and begs that he may not be despised. In the evening I gave a very splendid dinner. Eighteen covers, most magnificent flowers, and such table decoration as was never seen in these parts. The whole thing was a great success, and everybody was delighted.

My holiday-making is simply thorough resting, except on Wednesday, when I dine with Longfellow. We are not quite determined whether Mrs. Fields did not desert our colours, by coming on the ground in a carriage, and having *bread soaked in brandy* put into the winning man's mouth as he steamed along. She pleaded that she would have done as much for Dolby, if *he* had been ahead, so we are inclined to forgive her. As she had done so much for me in the way of flowers, I thought I would show her a sight in that line at the dinner. You never saw anything like it. Two immense crowns; the base of the choicest exotics; and the loops, oval masses of violets. In the centre of the table an immense basket, overflowing with enormous bell-mouthed lilies; all round the table a bright green border of wreathed creeper, with clustering roses at intervals; a rose for every button-hole, and a bouquet for every lady. They made an exhibition of the table before dinner to numbers of people.

P. H. has just come in with a newspaper, containing a reference (in good taste!) to the walking-match. He posts it to you by this post.

It is telegraphed that the storm prevails over an im-

mense extent of country, and is just the same at Chicago as here. I hope it may prove a wind-up. We are getting sick of the sound of sleigh-bells even.

Your account of Anne has greatly interested me.

* * * * * *

To Charles Fechter.

Syracuse, U.S. of America,
Sunday Night, Eighth March, 1868.

My dear Fechter—I am here in a most wonderful out-of-the-world place, which looks as if it had begun to be built yesterday, and were going to be imperfectly knocked together with a nail or two the day after to-morrow. I am in the worst inn that ever was seen, and outside is a thaw that places the whole country under water. I have looked out of window for the people, and I can't find any people. I have tried all the wines in the house, and there are only two wines, for which you pay six shillings a bottle, or fifteen, according as you feel disposed to change the name of the thing you ask for. (The article never changes.) The bill of fare is "in French," and the principal article (the carte is printed) is "Paettie de shay." I asked the Irish waiter what this dish was, and he said: "It was the name the steward giv' to oyster patties—the Frinch name." These are the drinks you are to wash it down with: "Mooseux," "Abasinthe," "Curacco," "Marschine," "Annise," and "Margeaux"!

I am growing very home-sick, and very anxious for the Twenty-second of April; on which day, please God, I embark for home. I am beginning to be tired, and have been depressed all the time (except when reading) and have lost my appetite. I cannot tell you—but you know, and therefore why should I?—how overjoyed I shall be to see you again, my dear boy, and how sorely I miss a dear friend, and how sorely I miss all art, in these parts. No disparagement to the country, which has a great future in reserve, or to its people, who are very kind to me.

I mean to take my leave of readings in the autumn and winter, in a final series in England with Chappell. This will come into the way of literary work for a time, for, after I have rested—don't laugh—it is a grim reality—I shall have to turn my mind to—ha! ha! ha!—to—ha!

ha! ha! (more sepulchrally than before)—the—the CHRISTMAS NUMBER!!! I feel as if I had murdered a Christmas number years ago (perhaps I did!) and its ghost perpetually haunted me. Nevertheless in some blessed rest at Gad's, we will talk over stage matters, and all matters, in an even way, and see what we can make of them, please God. Be sure that I shall not be in London one evening, after disembarking, without coming round to the theatre to embrace you, my dear fellow.

I have had an American cold (the worst in the world) since Christmas Day. I read four times a week, with the most tremendous energy I can bring to bear upon it. I travel about pretty heavily. I read in all sorts of places —churches, theatres, concert rooms, lecture halls. Every night I read I am described (mostly by people who have not the faintest notion of observing) from the sole of my boot to where the topmost hair of my head ought to be but is not. Sometimes I am described as being "evidently nervous"; sometimes it is rather taken ill that "Mr. Dickens is so extraordinarily composed." My eyes are blue, red, grey, white, green, brown, black, hazel, violet, and rainbow-coloured. I am like "a well-to-do American gentleman," and the Emperor of the French, with an occasional touch of the Emperor of China, and a deterioration from the attributes of our famous townsman, Rufus W. B. D. Dodge Grumsher Pickville. I say all sorts of things that I never said, go to all sorts of places that I never saw or heard of, and have done all manner of things (in some previous state of existence I suppose) that have quite escaped my memory. You ask your friend to describe what he is about. This is what he is about, every day and hour of his American life.—Ever, my dear Fechter,

Your most affectionate and hearty Friend.

PS.—Don't let Madame Fechter, or Marie, or Paul forget me!

To MISS HOGARTH.

SYRACUSE, *Sunday, Eighth March*, 1868.

MY DEAREST GEORGY—This is a very grim place in a heavy thaw, and a most depressing one. The hotel also is surprisingly bad, quite a triumph in that way. We

stood out for an hour in the melting snow, and came in again, having to change completely. Then we sat down by the stove (no fireplace), and there we are now. We were so afraid to go to bed last night, the rooms were so close and sour, that we played whist, double dummy, till we couldn't bear each other any longer. We had an old buffalo for supper, and an old pig for breakfast, and we are going to have I don't know what for dinner at six. In the public rooms downstairs, a number of men (speechless) are sitting in rocking-chairs, with their feet against the window-frames, staring out at window and spitting dolefully at intervals. Scott is in tears, and George the gasman is suborning people to go and clean the hall, which is a marvel of dirt.

We were at Albany the night before last and yesterday morning; a very pretty town, where I am to read on the eighteenth and nineteenth. This day week we hope to wash out this establishment with the Falls of Niagara. And there is my news, except that your *last letters* to me in America must be posted by the Cunard steamer, which will sail from Liverpool on *Saturday, the Fourth of April.* These I shall be safe to get before embarking.

I send a note to Katie (addressed to Mamie) by this mail.

To W. C. Macready.

Springfield, Mass., *Saturday, Twenty-first March,* 1868.

My dearest Macready—What with perpetual reading and travelling, and what with one of the severest winters ever known, your coals of fire received by the last mail did not burn my head so much as they might have done under less excusatory circumstances. But they scorched it too!

You would find the general aspect of America and Americans decidedly much improved. You would find immeasurably greater consideration and respect for your privacy than of old. You would find a steady change for the better everywhere, except (oddly enough) in the railroads generally, which seem to have stood still, while everything else has moved. But there is an exception westward. There the express trains have now a very delightful carriage called a "drawing-room car," literally a

series of little private drawing-rooms, with sofas and a table in each, opening out of a little corridor. In each, too, is a large plate-glass window, with which you can do as you like. As you pay extra for this luxury, it may be regarded as the first move towards two classes of passengers. When the railroad straight away to San Francisco (in six days) shall be opened through, it will not only have these drawing-rooms, but sleeping-rooms too; a bell in every little compartment, communicating with a steward's pantry, a restaurant, a staff of servants, marble washing-stands, and a barber's shop! I looked into one of these cars a day or two ago, and it was very ingeniously arranged and quite complete.

I left Niagara last Sunday, and travelled on to Albany, through three hundred miles of flood, villages deserted, bridges broken, fences drifting away, nothing but tearing water, floating ice, and absolute wreck and ruin. The train gave in altogether at Utica, and the passengers were let loose there for the night. As I was due at Albany, a very active superintendent of works did all he could to "get Mr. Dickens along," and in the morning we resumed our journey through the water, with a hundred men in seven-league boots pushing the ice from before us with long poles. How we got to Albany I can't say, but we got there somehow, just in time for a triumphal "Carol" and "Trial." All the tickets had been sold, and we found the Albanians in a state of great excitement. You may imagine what the flood was when I tell you that we took the passengers out of two trains that had their fires put out by the water four-and-twenty hours before, and cattle from trucks that had been in the water I don't know how long, but so long that the sheep had begun to eat each other! It was a horrible spectacle, and the haggard human misery of their faces was quite a new study. There was a fine breath of spring in the air concurrently with the great thaw; but lo and behold! last night it began to snow again with a strong wind, and to-day a snowdrift covers this place with all the desolation of winter once more. I never was so tired of the sight of snow.

I have seen all our Boston friends, except Curtis. Ticknor is dead. The rest are very little changed, except that Longfellow has a perfectly white flowing beard and long white hair. But he does not otherwise look old,

and is infinitely handsomer than he was. I have been constantly with them all, and they have always talked much of you. It is the established joke that Boston is "my native place," and we hold all sorts of hearty fore-gatherings. They all come to every reading, and are always in a most delightful state of enthusiasm. They gave me a parting dinner at the club, on the Thursday before Good Friday. To pass from Boston personal to New York theatrical, I will mention here that one of the proprietors of my New York hotel is one of the proprietors of Niblo's, and the most active. Consequently I have seen the "Black Crook" and the "White Fawn," in majesty, from an arm-chair in the first entrance, P.S., more than once. Of these astonishing dramas, I beg to report (seriously) that I have found no human creature "behind" who has the slightest idea what they are about (upon my honour, my dearest Macready!), and that having some amiable small talk with a neat little Spanish woman, who is the *première danseuse*, I asked her, in joke, to let me measure her skirt with my dress glove. Holding the glove by the tip of the forefinger, I found the skirt to be just three gloves long, and yet its length was much in excess of the skirts of two hundred other ladies, whom the carpenters were at that moment getting into their places for a transformation scene, on revolving columns, on wires and "travellers" in iron cradles, up in the flies, down in the cellars, on every description of float that Wilmot, gone distracted, could imagine!

I am delighted to hear of Benvenuta's marriage, and I think her husband a very lucky man. Johnnie has my profound sympathy under his examinatorial woes. The noble boy will give me Gavazzi revised and enlarged, I expect, when I next come to Cheltenham. I will give you and Mrs. Macready all my American experiences when you come to London, or, better still, to Gad's. Meanwhile I send my hearty love to all, not forgetting dear Katie.

Niagara is not at all spoiled by a very dizzy-looking suspension bridge. Is to have another still nearer to the Horse-shoe opened in July. My last sight of that scene (last Sunday) was thus: We went up to the rapids above the Horse-shoe—say two miles from it—and through the great cloud of spray. Everything in the magnificent val-

ley—buildings, forest, high banks, air, water, everything —was *made of rainbow*. Turner's most imaginative drawing in his finest day has nothing in it so ethereal, so gorgeous in fancy, so celestial. We said to one another (Dolby and I), "Let it evermore remain so," and shut our eyes and came away.

God bless you and all dear to you, my dear old Friend!

I am ever your affectionate and loving.

To James T. Fields.

Aboard the Russia, bound for Liverpool,
Sunday, Twenty-sixth April, 1868.

My dear Fields—In order that you may have the earliest intelligence of me, I begin this note to-day in my small cabin, purposing (if it should prove practicable) to post it at Queenstown for the return steamer.

We are already past the Banks of Newfoundland, although our course was seventy miles to the south, with the view of avoiding ice seen by Judkins in the Scotia on his passage out to New York. The Russia is a magnificent ship, and has dashed along bravely. We had made more than thirteen hundred and odd miles at noon to-day. The wind, after being a little capricious, rather threatens at the present time to turn against us, but our run is already eighty miles ahead of the Russia's last run in this direction—a very fast one. . . . To all whom it may concern, report the Russia in the highest terms. She rolls more easily than the other Cunard Screws, is kept in perfect order, and is most carefully looked after in all departments. We have had nothing approaching to heavy weather, still one can speak to the trim of the ship. Her captain, a gentleman; bright, polite, good-natured, and vigilant. . . .

As to me, I am greatly better, I hope. I have got on my right boot to-day for the first time; the "true American" seems to be turning faithless at last; and I made a Gad's Hill breakfast this morning, as a further advance on having otherwise eaten and drunk all day ever since Wednesday.

You will see Anthony Trollope, I dare say. What was my amazement to see him with these eyes come aboard in the mail tender just before we started! He had come

out in the Scotia just in time to dash off again in said tender to shake hands with me, knowing me to be aboard here. It was most heartily done. He is on a special mission of convention with the United States post-office.

We have been picturing your movements, and have duly checked off your journey home, and have talked about you continually. But I have thought about you both, even much, much more. You will never know how I loved you both; or what you have been to me in America, and will always be to me everything; or how fervently I thank you.

All the working of the ship seems to be done on my forehead. It is scrubbed and holystoned (my head—not the deck) at three every morning. It is scraped and swabbed all day. Eight pairs of heavy boots are now clattering on it, getting the ship under sail again. Legions of ropes'-ends are flopped upon it as I write.

Thursday, Thirtieth.

Soon after I left off as above we had a gale of wind which blew all night. For a few hours on the evening side of midnight there was no getting from this cabin of mine to the saloon, or *vice versâ*, so heavily did the sea break over the decks. The ship, however, made nothing of it, and we were all right again by Monday afternoon. Except for a few hours yesterday (when we had a very light head-wind), the weather has been constantly favourable, and we are now bowling away at a great rate, with a fresh breeze filling all our sails. We expect to be at Queenstown between midnight and three in the morning.

I hope, my dear Fields, you may find this legible, but I rather doubt it, for there is motion enough on the ship to render writing to a landsman, however accustomed to pen and ink, rather a difficult achievement. Besides which, I slide away gracefully from the paper, whenever I want to be particularly expressive. . . . .

——, sitting opposite to me at breakfast, always has the following items: A large dish of porridge into which he casts slices of butter and a quantity of sugar. Two cups of tea. A steak. Irish stew. Chutnee and marmalade. Another deputation of two has solicited a reading

to-night. Illustrious novelist has unconditionally and absolutely declined. More love, and more to that, from your ever affectionate friend.

To the Hon. Mrs. Watson.

Gad's Hill Place, *Monday, Eleventh May*, 1868.

My dear Mrs. Watson—I am delighted to have your letter. It comes to me like a faithful voice from dear old Rockingham, and awakens many memories.

The work in America has been so very hard, and the winter there has been so excessively severe, that I really have been very unwell for some months. But I had not been at sea three days on the passage home when I became myself again.

If you will arrange with Mary Boyle any time for coming here, we shall be charmed to see you, and I will adapt my arrangements accordingly. I make this suggestion because she generally comes here early in the summer season. But if you will propose yourself *anyhow*, giving me a margin of a few days in case of my being pre-engaged for this day or that, we will (as my American friends say) "fix it."

What with travelling, reading night after night, and speech-making day after day, I feel the peace of the country beyond all expression. On board ship coming home, a "deputation" (two in number, of whom only one could get into my cabin, while the other looked in at my window) came to ask me to read to the passengers that evening in the saloon. I respectfully replied that sooner than do it, I would assault the captain, and be put in irons.

Ever affectionately yours.

To James T. Fields.

"All the Year Round" Office, *Fifteenth May*, 1868.

My dear Fields—I have found it so extremely difficult to write about America (though never so briefly) without appearing to blow trumpets on the one hand, or to be inconsistent with my avowed determination *not* to write about it on the other, that I have taken the simple course enclosed. The number will be published on the

Sixth of June. It appears to me to be the most modest and manly course, and to derive some graceful significance from its title.

Thank my dear Mrs. Fields from me for her delightful letter received on the sixteenth. I will write to her very soon, and tell her about the dogs. I would write by this post, but that Wills's absence (in Sussex, and getting no better there as yet) so overwhelms me with business that I can scarcely get through it.

Miss me? Ah, my dear fellow, but how do I miss *you!* We talk about you both at Gad's Hill every day of our lives. And I never see the place looking very pretty indeed, or hear the birds sing all day long and the nightingales all night, without restlessly wishing that you were both there.

With best love, and truest and most enduring regard, ever, my dear Fields, Your most affectionate.

Everything here looks lovely, and I find it (you will be surprised to hear) really a pretty place! I have seen "No Thoroughfare" twice. Excellent things in it, but it drags to my thinking. It is, however, a great success in the country, and is now getting up with great force in Paris. Fechter is ill, and was ordered off to Brighton yesterday. Otherwise, thank God, I find everything well and thriving. You and my dear Mrs. Fields are constantly in my mind. Procter greatly better.

To W. C. Macready.

Gad's Hill, *Wednesday, Tenth June,* 1868.

My dearest Macready—Since my return from America, I have been so overwhelmed with business that I have not had time even to write to you. You may imagine what six months of arrear are to dispose of; added to this, Wills has received a concussion of the brain (from an accident in the hunting-field), and is sent away by the doctors, and strictly prohibited from even writing a note. Consequently all the business and money details of "All the Year Round" devolve upon me. And I have had to get them up, for I have never had experience of them. Then I am suddenly entreated to go to Paris, to look after

the French version of "No Thoroughfare" on the stage. And I go, and come back, leaving it a great success.

I hope Mrs. Macready and you have not abandoned the idea of coming here? The expression of this hope is the principal, if not the only, object of this present note. May the amiable secretary vouchsafe a satisfactory reply!

The undersigned is in his usual brilliant condition, and indeed greatly disappointed them at home here, by coming back "so brown and looking so well." Katie, Mary, and Georgina expected a wreck, and were, at first, much mortified. But they are getting over it now.—Ever, my dearest Macready, Your most affectionate.

To James T. Fields.

Gad's Hill Place, *Tuesday, Seventh July*, 1868.

My dear Fields—I have delayed writing to you (and Mrs. Fields, to whom my love) until I should have seen Longfellow. When he was in London the first time he came and went without reporting himself, and left me in a state of unspeakable discomfiture. Indeed, I should not have believed in his having been here at all, if Mrs. Procter had not told me of his calling to see Procter. However, on his return he wrote to me from the Langham Hotel, and I went up to town to see him, and to make an appointment for his coming here. He, the girls, and Appleton, came down last Saturday night and stayed until Monday forenoon. I showed them all the neighbouring country that could be shown in so short a time, and they finished off with a tour of inspection of the kitchens, pantry, wine-cellar, pickles, sauces, servants' sitting-room, general household stores, and even the Cellar Book, of this illustrious establishment. Forster and Kent (the latter wrote certain verses to Longfellow, which have been published in the "Times," and which I sent to D——) came down for a day, and I hope we all had a really "good time." I turned out a couple of postilions in the old red jacket of the old red royal Dover road, for our ride; and it was like a holiday ride in England fifty years ago. Of course we went to look at the old houses at Rochester, and the old cathedral, and the old castle, and the house for the six poor travellers who,

"not being rogues or proctors, shall have lodging, entertainment, and four pence each."

Nothing can surpass the respect paid to Longfellow here, from the Queen downward. He is everywhere received and courted, and finds (as I told him he would, when we talked of it in Boston) the working-men at least as well acquainted with his books as the classes socially above them. . . .

Last Thursday I attended, as sponsor, the christening of Dolby's son and heir—a most jolly baby, who held on tight by the rector's left whisker while the service was performed. What time, too, his little sister, connecting me with the pony, trotted up and down the centre aisle, noisily driving herself as that celebrated animal, so that it went very hard with the sponsorial dignity.

I am delighted to find you both so well pleased with the Blind Book scheme.* I said nothing of it to you when we were together, though I had made up my mind, because I wanted to come upon you with that little burst from a distance. It seemed something like meeting again when I remitted the money and thought of your talking of it.

The dryness of the weather is amazing. All the ponds and surface-wells about here are waterless, and the poor people suffer greatly. The people of this village have only one spring to resort to, and it is a couple of miles from many cottages. I do not let the great dogs swim in the canal, because the people have to drink of it. But when they get into the Medway it is hard to get them out again. The other day Bumble (the son, Newfoundland dog) got into difficulties among some floating timber, and became frightened. Don (the father) was standing by me, shaking off the wet and looking on carelessly, when all of a sudden he perceived something amiss, and went in with a bound and brought Bumble out by the ear. The scientific way in which he towed him along was charming. Ever your loving.

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* A copy of "The Old Curiosity Shop," in raised letters for the use of the blind, had been printed by Dickens's order at the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston, and presented by him to that institution in this year.—Ed.

To Henry Fielding Dickens.*

Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool,
Thursday, Fifteenth October, 1868.

My dear Harry—I have your letter here this morning.

Now, observe attentively. We must have no shadow of debt. Square up everything whatsoever that it has been necessary to buy. Let not a farthing be outstanding on any account, when we begin with your allowance. Be particular in the minutest detail.

I wish to have no secret from you in the relations we are to establish together, and I therefore send you Joe Chitty's † letter bodily. Reading it, you will know exactly what I know, and will understand that I treat you with perfect confidence. It appears to me that an allowance of two hundred and fifty pounds a year will be handsome for all your wants, if I send you your wines. I mean this to include your tailor's bills as well as every other expense; and I strongly recommend you to buy nothing in Cambridge, and to take credit for nothing but the clothes with which your tailor provides you. As soon as you have got your furniture accounts in, let us wipe all those preliminary expenses clean out, and I will then send you your first quarter.

You know how hard I work for what I get, and I think you know that I never had money help from any human creature after I was a child. You know that you are one of many heavy charges on me, and that I trust to your so exercising your abilities and improving the advantages of your past expensive education, as soon to diminish *this* charge. I say no more on that head.

Whatever you do, above all other things keep out of debt and confide in me. If ever you find yourself on the verge of any perplexity or difficulty, come to me. You will never find me hard with you while you are manly and truthful.

As your brothers have gone away one by one, I have written to each of them what I am now going to write to you. You know that you have never been hampered with religious forms of restraint, and that with mere un-

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* On his entering Trinity Hall, Cambridge, as an undergraduate. —Ed.

† Afterwards Mr. Justice Chitty.—Ed.

meaning forms I have no sympathy. But I most strongly and affectionately impress upon you the priceless value of the New Testament, and the study of that book as the one unfailing guide in life. Deeply respecting it, and bowing down before the character of our Saviour, as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men, you cannot go very wrong, and will always preserve at heart a true spirit of veneration and humility. Similarly I impress upon you the habit of saying a Christian prayer every night and morning. These things have stood by me all through my life, and remember that I tried to render the New Testament intelligible to you and lovable by you when you were a mere baby.—And so God bless you. Ever your affectionate Father.

To Mrs. James T. Fields.

Glasgow, *Wednesday, Sixteenth December*, 1868.

My dear Mrs. Fields— . . . First, as you are curious about the "Oliver murder," I will tell you about that trial of the same at which you *ought* to have assisted. There were about a hundred people present in all. I have changed my stage. Besides that back screen which you know so well, there are two large screens of the same colour, set off, one on either side, like the "wings" at a theatre. And besides these again, we have a quantity of curtains of the same colour, with which to close in any width of room from wall to wall. Consequently, the figure is now completely isolated, and the slightest action becomes much more important. This was used for the first time on the occasion. But behind the stage—the orchestra being very large and built for the accommodation of a numerous chorus—there was ready, on the level of the platform, a very long table, beautifully lighted, with a large staff of men ready to open oysters and set champagne-corks flying. Directly I had done, the screens being whisked off by my people, there was disclosed one of the prettiest banquets you can imagine; and when all the people came up, and the gay dresses of the ladies were lighted by those powerful lights of mine, the scene was exquisitely pretty; the hall being newly decorated, and very elegantly; and the whole looking like a great bed of flowers and diamonds.

Now, you must know that all this company were, before the wine went round, unmistakably pale, and had horror-stricken faces. Next morning Harness (Fields knows—Rev. William—did an edition of Shakespeare—old friend of the Kembles and Mrs. Siddons), writing to me about it, and saying it was "a most amazing and terrific thing," added, "but I am bound to tell you that I had an almost irresistible impulse upon me to *scream*, and that, if any one had cried out, I am certain I should have followed." He had no idea that, on the night, Preistley, the great ladies' doctor, had taken me aside and said: "My dear Dickens, you may rely upon it that if only one woman cries out when you murder the girl, there will be a contagion of hysteria all over this place." It is impossible to soften it without spoiling it, and you may suppose that I am rather anxious to discover how it goes on the Fifth of January ! ! ! We are afraid to announce it elsewhere, without knowing, except that I have thought it pretty safe to put it up once in Dublin. I asked Mrs. Keeley, the famous actress, who was at the experiment: "What do *you* say? Do it or not?" "Why, of course, do it," she replied. "Having got at such an effect as that, it must be done. But," rolling her large black eyes very slowly, and speaking very distinctly, "the public have been looking out for a sensation these last fifty years or so, and by Heaven they have got it!" With which words, and a long breath and a long stare, she became speechless. Again, you may suppose that I am a little anxious!

My old likening of Boston to Edinburgh has been constantly revived within these last ten days. There is a certain remarkable similarity of *tone* between the two places. The audiences are curiously alike, except that the Edinburgh audience has a quicker sense of humour and is a little more genial. No disparagement to Boston in this, because I consider an Edinburgh audience perfect.

I trust, my dear Eugenius, that you have recognised yourself in a certain Uncommercial, and also some small reference to a name rather dear to you? As an instance of how strangely something comic springs up in the midst of the direst misery, look to a succeeding Uncommercial, called "A Small Star in the East," published to-day, by the bye. I have described, *with exactness*, the poor places

into which I went, and how the people behaved, and what they said. I was wretched, looking on; and yet the boiler-maker and the poor man with the legs filled me with a sense of drollery not to be kept down by any pressure.

The atmosphere of this place, compounded of mists from the highlands and smoke from the town factories, is crushing my eyebrows as I write, and it rains as it never does rain anywhere else, and always does rain here. It is a dreadful place, though much improved and possessing a deal of public spirit. Improvement is beginning to knock the old town of Edinburgh about, here and there; but the Canongate and the most picturesque of the horrible courts and wynds are not to be easily spoiled, or made fit for the poor wretches who people them to live in. Edinburgh is so changed as to its notabilities, that I had the only three men left of the Wilson and Jeffrey time to dine with me there, last Saturday.

I think you will find "Fatal Zero" (by Percy Fitzgerald) a very curious analysis of a mind, as the story advances. A new beginner in "A. Y. R." (Hon. Mrs. Clifford, Kinglake's sister), who wrote a story in the series just finished, called "The Abbot's Pool," has just sent me another story. I have a strong impression that, with care, she will step into Mrs. Gaskell's vacant place. Wills is no better, and I have work enough even in that direction.

God bless the woman with the black mittens for making me laugh so this morning! I take her to be a kind of public-spirited Mrs. Sparsit, and as such take her to my bosom. God bless you both, my dear friends, in this Christmas and New Year time, and in all times, seasons, and places, and send you to Gad's Hill with the next flowers! Ever your most affectionate.

To Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens.*

My dearest Plorn—I write this note to-day because your going away is much upon my mind, and because I want you to have a few parting words from me to think of now and then at quiet times. I need not tell you that I love you dearly, and am very, very sorry in my heart

* This letter, written in 1868, was given by Charles Dickens to his youngest son on the day of his departure for Australia.—Ed.

to part with you. But this life is half made up of partings, and these pains must be borne. It is my comfort and my sincere conviction that you are going to try the life for which you are fitted best. I think its freedom and wildness more suited to you than any experiment in a study or office would ever have been; and without that training, you could have followed no other suitable occupation.

What you have already wanted until now has been a set, steady, constant purpose. I therefore exhort you to persevere in a thorough determination to do whatever you have to do as well as you can do it. I was not so old as you are now when I first had to win my food, and do this out of this determination, and I have never slackened in it since.

Never take a mean advantage of any one in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Try to do to others, as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by our Saviour, than that you should.

I put a New Testament among your books, for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child; because it is the best book that ever was or will be known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one, I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of men.

You will remember that you have never at home been wearied about religious observances or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it.

Only one thing more on this head. The more we are in earnest as to feeling it, the less we are disposed to hold forth about it. Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it.

I hope you will always be able to say in after life, that you had a kind father. You cannot show your affection for him so well, or make him so happy, as by doing your duty. Your affectionate Father.

To Miss Mary Boyle.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Wednesday, Sixth January, 1869.

My dear Mary—I was more affected than you can easily believe, by the sight of your gift lying on my dressing-table, on the morning of the new year. To be remembered in a friend's heart when it is sore is a touching thing; and that and the remembrance of the dead quite overpowered me, the one being inseparable from the other.

You may be sure that I shall attach a special interest and value to the beautiful present, and shall wear it as a kind of charm. God bless you, and may we carry the friendship through many coming years!

My preparations for a certain murder that I had to do last night have rendered me unfit for letter-writing these last few days, or you would have heard from me sooner. The crime being completely off my mind and the blood spilled, I am (like many of my fellow-criminals) in a highly edifying state to-day.—Ever believe me,

Your affectionate Friend.

To Miss Dickens.

Birmingham, *Friday, Fifth March,* 1869.

My dearest Mamie—This is to send you my best love, and to wish you many and many happy returns of to-morrow, which I miraculously remember to be your birthday.

I saw this morning a very pretty fan here. I was going to buy it as a remembrance of the occasion, when I was

checked by a dim misgiving that you had a fan not long ago from Chorley. Tell me what you would like better, and consider me your debtor in that article, whatever it may be.

I have had my usual left boot on this morning, and have had an hour's walk. It was in a gale of wind and a simoom of dust, but I greatly enjoyed it. Immense enthusiasm at Wolverhampton last night over "Marigold." Scott made a most amazing ass of himself yesterday. He reported that he had left behind somewhere three books —"Boots," "Murder," and "Gamp." We immediately telegraphed to the office. Answer, no books there. As my impression was that he must have left them at St. James's Hall, we then arranged to send him up to London at seven this morning. Meanwhile (though not reproached), he wept copiously and audibly. I had asked him over and over again, was he sure he had not put them in my large black trunk? Too sure, too sure. Hadn't opened that trunk after Tuesday night's reading. He opened it to get some clothes out when I went to bed, and there the books were! He produced them with an air of injured surprise, as if we had put them there.

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To Thomas Chappell.

Office of "All the Year Round,"
Monday, Third May, 1869.

My dear Mr. Chappell—I am really touched by your letter. I can most truthfully assure you that your part in the inconvenience of this mishap has given me much more concern than my own; and that if I did not hope to have our London Farewells yet, I should be in a very gloomy condition on your account.

Pray do not suppose that *you* are to blame for my having done a little too much—a wild fancy indeed! The simple fact is, that the rapid railway travelling was stretched a hair's breadth too far, and that *I* ought to have foreseen it. For, on the night before the last night of our reading in America, when Dolby was cheering me with a review of the success, and the immediate prospect of the voyage home, I told him, to his astonishment: "I

am too far gone, and too worn out to realise anything but my own exhaustion. Believe me, if I had to read but twice more, instead of once, I couldn't do it." We were then just beyond our recent number. And it was the travelling that I had felt throughout.

The sharp precautionary remedy of stopping instantly, was almost as instantly successful the other day. I told Dr. Watson that he had never seen me knocked out of time, and that he had no idea of the rapidity with which I should come up again.

Just as three days' repose on the Atlantic steamer made me, in my altered appearance, the amazement of the captain, so this last week has set me up, thank God, in the most wonderful manner. The sense of exhaustion seems a dream already. Of course I shall train myself carefully, nevertheless, all through the summer and autumn.

I beg to send my kind regards to Mrs. Chappell, and I shall hope to see her and you at Teddington in the long bright days. It would disappoint me indeed if a lasting friendship did not come of our business relations.

In the spring I trust I shall be able to report to you that I am ready to take my Farewells in London. Of this I am pretty certain: that I never will take them at all, unless with you on your own conditions.

With an affectionate regard for you and your brother, believe me always, Very faithfully yours.

To Mr. Rusden.

"All the Year Round" Office,
Tuesday, Eighteenth May, 1869.

My dear Mr. Rusden—As I dare say some exaggerated accounts of my having been very ill have reached you, I begin with the true version of the case.

I dare say I *should* have been very ill if I had not suddenly stopped my Farewell Readings when there were yet five-and-twenty remaining to be given. I was quite exhausted, and was warned by the doctors to stop (for the time) instantly. Acting on the advice, and going home into Kent for rest, I immediately began to recover, and within a fortnight was in the brilliant condition in which I can now—thank God—report myself.

I can not thank you enough for your care of Plorn. I was quite prepared for his not settling down without a lurch or two. I still hope that he may take to colonial life. . . . In his letter to me about his leaving the station to which he got through your kindness, he expresses his gratitude to you quite as strongly as if he had made a wonderful success, and seems to have acquired no distaste for anything but the one individual of whom he wrote that betrayed letter. But knowing the boy, I want to try him fully.

You know all our public news, such as it is, at least as well as I do. Many people here (of whom I am one) do not like the book of American matters.

What I most fear is that the perpetual bluster of a party in the States will at last set the patient British back up. And if our people begin to bluster too, and there should come into existence an exasperating war-party on both sides, there will be great danger of a daily-widening breach.

The first shriek of the first engine that traverses the San Francisco Railroad from end to end will be a death-warning to the disciples of Jo Smith. The moment the Mormon bubble gets touched by neighbours it will break. Similarly, the red man's course is very nearly run. A scalped stoker is the outward and visible sign of his utter extermination. Not Quakers enough to reach from here to Jerusalem will save him by the term of a single year.

I don't know how it may be with you, but it is the fashion here to be absolutely certain that the Emperor of the French is fastened by Providence and the fates on a throne of adamant expressly constructed for him since the foundations of the universe were laid.

He knows better, and so do the police of Paris, and both powers must be grimly entertained by the resolute British belief, knowing what they have known, and doing what they have done through the last ten years. What Victor Hugo calls "the drop-curtain, behind which is constructing the great last act of the French Revolution," has been a little shaken at the bottom lately, however. One seems to see the feet of a rather large chorus getting ready.—Believe me, my dear Mr. Rusden,

Yours faithfully and much obliged.

To Arthur Ryland.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent,
Friday, Thirteenth August, 1869.

My dear Mr. Ryland—Many thanks for your letter.

I have very strong opinions on the subject of speechification, and hold that there is, everywhere, a vast amount too much of it. A sense of absurdity would be so strong upon me, if I got up at Birmingham to make a flourish on the advantages of education in the abstract for all sorts and conditions of men, that I should inevitably check myself and present a surprising incarnation of the soul of wit. But if I could interest myself in the practical usefulness of the particular institution; in the ways of life of the students; their examples of perseverance and determination to get on; in their numbers, their favourite studies, the number of hours they must daily give to the work that must be done for a livelihood, before they can devote themselves to the acquisition of new knowledge, and so forth, then I could interest others. This is the kind of information I want. Mere holding forth "I utterly detest, abominate, and abjure."

I fear I shall not be in London next week. But if you will kindly send me here, at your leisure, the roughest notes of such points as I have indicated, I shall be heartily obliged to you, and will take care of their falling into shape and order in my mind. Very faithfully yours.

To James T. Fields.

5 Hyde Park Place, London, W.,
Friday, Fourteenth January, 1870.

My dear Fields—We live here (opposite the Marble Arch) in a charming house until the First of June, and then return to Gad's. The conservatory is completed, and is a brilliant success; but an expensive one!

I should be quite ashamed of not having written to you and my dear Mrs. Fields before now, if I didn't know that you will both understand how occupied I am, and how naturally, when I put my papers away for the day, I get up and fly. I have a large room here, with three fine windows, overlooking the Park—unsurpassable for airiness and cheerfulness.

You saw the announcement of the death of poor dear Harness. The circumstances are curious. He wrote to his old friend the Dean of Battle saying he would come to visit him on that day (the day of his death). The Dean wrote back: "Come next day, instead, as we are obliged to go out to dinner, and you will be alone." Harness told his sister a little impatiently that he *must* go on the first-named day; that he had made up his mind to go, and MUST. He had been getting himself ready for dinner, and came to a part of the staircase whence two doors opened—one, upon another level passage, one, upon a flight of stone steps. He opened the wrong door, fell down the steps, injured himself very severely, and died in a few hours.

You will know—*I* don't—what Fechter's success is in America at the time of this present writing. In his farewell performances at the Princess's he acted very finely. I thought the three first acts of his Hamlet very much better than I had ever thought them before—and I always thought very highly of them. We gave him a foaming stirrup cup at Gad's Hill.

Forster (who has been ill with his bronchitis again) thinks No. 2 of the new book ("Edwin Drood") a clincher, —I mean that word (as his own expression) for "Clincher." There is a curious interest steadily working up to No. 5, which requires a great deal of art and self-denial. I think also, apart from character and picturesqueness, that the young people are placed in a very novel situation. So I hope—at Nos. 5 and 6, the story will turn upon an interest suspended until the end.

I can't believe it, and don't and won't, but they say Harry's twenty-first birthday is next Sunday. I have entered him at the Temple just now; and if he don't get a fellowship at Trinity Hall when his time comes, I shall be disappointed, if in the present disappointed state of existence.

I hope you may have met with the little touch of Radicalism I gave them at Birmingham in the words of Buckle? With pride I observe that it makes the regular political traders, of all sorts, perfectly mad. Sich was my intentions, as a grateful acknowledgment of having been misrepresented.

I think Mrs. ——'s prose very admirable; but I don't

believe it! No, I do *not*. My conviction is that those islanders get frightfully bored by the islands, and wish they had never set eyes upon them.

Charley Collins has done a charming cover for the monthly part of the new book. At the very earnest representations of Millais (and after having seen a great number of his drawings) I am going to engage with a new man; retaining, of course, C. C.'s cover aforesaid.* Katie has made some more capital portraits, and is always improving.

My dear Mrs. Fields, if "He" (made proud by chairs and bloated by pictures) does not give you my dear love, let us conspire against him when you find him out, and exclude him from all future confidences. Until then,

Ever affectionately yours and his.

To Mr. Rusden.

Athenæum, *Friday Evening, Twentieth May*, 1870.

My dear Mr. Rusden—I received your most interesting and clear-sighted letter about Plorn just before the departure of the last mail from here to you. I did not answer then because another incoming mail was nearly due, and I expected (knowing Plorn so well) that some communication from him such as he made to you would come to me. I was not mistaken. The same arguing of the squatter question—vegetables and all—appeared. This gave me an opportunity of touching on these points by this mail, without in the least compromising you. I cannot too completely express my concurrence with your excellent idea that his correspondence with you should be regarded as confidential. Just as I could not possibly suggest a word more neatly to the point, or more thoughtfully addressed, to such a young man than your reply to his letter, I hope you will excuse my saying that it is a perfect model of tact, good sense, and good feeling. I had been struck by his persistently ignoring the possibility of his holding any other position in Australia than his present position, and had inferred from it a homeward tendency. What is most curious to me is that he is very

* Charles Collins was obliged to give up the illustrating of "Edwin Drood" on account of his failing health.—Ed.

sensible, and yet does not seem to understand that he has qualified himself for no public examinations in the old country, and could not possibly hold his own against any competition for anything to which I could get him nominated.

But I must not trouble you about my boys as if they were yours. It is enough that I can never thank you for your goodness to them in a generous consideration of me.

I believe the truth as to France to be that a citizen Frenchman never forgives, and that Napoleon will never live down, the *coup d'état*. This makes it enormously difficult for any well-advised English newspaper to support him, and pretend not to know on what a volcano his throne is set. Informed as to his designs on the one hand, and the perpetual uneasiness of his police on the other, (to say nothing of a doubtful army), the "Times" has a difficult game to play. My own impression is that if it were played too boldly for him, the old deplorable national antagonism would revive in his going down. That the wind will pass over his Imperiality on the sands of France I have not the slightest doubt. In no country on the earth, but least of all there, can you seize people in their houses on political warrants, and kill in the streets, on no warrant at all, without raising a gigantic Nemesis —not very reasonable in detail, perhaps, but none the less terrible for that.

The commonest dog or man driven mad is a much more alarming creature than the same individuality in a sober and commonplace condition.

Your friend —— —— is setting the world right generally all round (including the flattened ends, the two poles), and, as a Minister said to me the other day, "has the little one fault of omniscience."

You will probably have read before now that I am going to be everything the Queen can make me.* If my authority be worth anything believe on it that I am going to be nothing but what I am, and that includes my being as long as I live,

Your faithful and heartily obliged.

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* An allusion to an unfounded rumour.—Ed.

To Alfred Tennyson Dickens.*

Athenæum Club, *Friday Night, Twentieth May*, 1870.

My dear Alfred—I have just time to tell you under my own hand that I invited Mr. Bear to a dinner of such guests as he would naturally like to see, and that we took to him very much, and got on with him capitally.

I am doubtful whether Plorn is taking to Australia. Can you find out his real mind? I notice that he always writes as if his present life were the be-all and the end-all of his emigration, and as if I had no idea of you two becoming proprietors, and aspiring to the first positions in the colony, without casting off the old connection.

From Mr. Bear I had the best accounts of you. I told him that they did not surprise me, for I had unbounded faith in you. For which take my love and blessing.

They will have told you all the news here, and that I am hard at work. This is not a letter so much as an assurance that I never think of you without hope and comfort.—Ever, my dear Alfred,

Your affectionate Father.†

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*Charles Dickens's son.—Ed.

† This Letter did not reach Australia until after these two absent sons of Charles Dickens had heard, by telegraph, the news of their father's death.—Ed.

To John M. Makeham.*

Gad's Hill Place,
Higham by Rochester, Kent.

Wednesday 7th Sept. June 1870

Dear Sir

It would be quite inconceivable that — but for your letter — that any reasonable reader could possibly attach a scriptural reference to a passage in a book of mine, reproducing a much abused social figure of speech, impressed into all sorts of service, on all sorts of inappropriate occasions, without the faintest connexion of it with its original source. I am truly shocked to find that any reader can make the mistake

I have always striven in my
writings to express veneration for
the life and lessons of Our Saviour:
because I feel it: and because I
re-wrote that history for my
children — every one of whom
knew it from having it repeated
to them — long before they could
read, and almost as soon as they could speak.
But I have never made
proclamation of this from the house tops.
Faithful friend
Charles Dickens

John M. Makeham Esqre

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*This letter was written on the day before that of Dickens's death, and was in reply to a letter from Mr. Makeham commenting regretfully upon Dickens's allusion, in the tenth chapter of "Edwin Drood," to the scriptural figure of speech, "a lamb that is led to the slaughter" (ISAIAH liii. 7).—ED.

SPEECHES OF CHARLES DICKENS.

SPEECHES OF CHARLES DICKENS.

I.

Edinburgh, *June* 25, 1841.

[At a public dinner, given in honour of Mr. Dickens, and presided over by the late Professor Wilson, the Chairman having proposed his health in a long and eloquent speech, Mr. Dickens returned thanks as follows:]

If I felt your warm and generous welcome less, I should be better able to thank you. If I could have listened as you have listened to the glowing language of your distinguished Chairman, and if I could have heard as you heard the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," which he has uttered, it would have gone hard but I should have caught some portion of his enthusiasm, and kindled at his example. But every word which fell from his lips, and every demonstration of sympathy and approbation with which you received his eloquent expressions, renders me unable to respond to his kindness, and leaves me at last all heart and no lips, yearning to respond as I would do to your cordial greeting—possessing, heaven knows, the will, and desiring only to find the way.

The way to your good opinion, favour, and support, has been to me very pleasing—a path strewn with flowers and cheered with sunshine. I feel as if I stood amongst old friends, whom I had intimately known and highly valued. I feel as if the deaths of the fictitious creatures, in which you have been kind enough to express an interest, had endeared us to each other as real afflictions deepen friendships in actual life; I feel as if they had been real persons, whose fortunes we had pursued together in inseparable connection, and that I had never known them apart from you.

It is a difficult thing for a man to speak of himself or of his works. But perhaps on this occasion I may, without

impropriety, venture to say a word on the spirit in which mine were conceived. I felt an earnest and humble desire, and shall do till I die, to increase the stock of harmless cheerfulness. I felt that the world was not utterly to be despised; that it was worthy of living in for many reasons. I was anxious to find, as the Professor has said, if I could, in evil things, that soul of goodness which the Creator has put in them. I was anxious to show that virtue may be found in the by-ways of the world, that it is not incompatible with poverty and even with rags, and to keep steadily through life the motto, expressed in the burning words of your Northern poet—

> The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that.

And in following this track, where could I have better assurance that I was right, or where could I have stronger assurance to cheer me on than in your kindness on this to me memorable night?

I am anxious and glad to have an opportunity of saying a word in reference to one incident in which I am happy to know you were interested, and still more happy to know, though it may sound paradoxical, that you were disappointed—I mean the death of the little heroine. When I first conceived the idea of conducting that simple story to its termination, I determined rigidly to adhere to it, and never to forsake the end I had in view. Not untried in the school of affliction, in the death of those we love, I thought what a good thing it would be if in my little work of pleasant amusement I could substitute a garland of fresh flowers for the sculptured horrors which disgrace the tomb. If I have put into my book anything which can fill the young mind with better thoughts of death, or soften the grief of older hearts; if I have written one word which can afford pleasure or consolation to old or young in time of trial, I shall consider it as something achieved—something which I shall be glad to look back upon in after life. Therefore I kept to my purpose, notwithstanding that towards the conclusion of the story, I daily received letters of remonstrance, especially from the ladies. God bless them for their tender mercies! The Professor was quite right when he said that I had not reached to an adequate delineation

of their virtues; and I fear that I must go on blotting their characters in endeavouring to reach the ideal in my mind. These letters were, however, combined with others from the sterner sex, and some of them were not altogether free from personal invective. But, notwithstanding, I kept to my purpose, and I am happy to know that many of those who at first condemned me are now foremost in their approbation.

If I have made a mistake in detaining you with this little incident, I do not regret having done so; for your kindness has given me such a confidence in you, that the fault is yours and not mine. I come once more to thank you, and here I am in a difficulty again. The distinction you have conferred upon me is one which I never hoped for, and of which I never dared to dream. That it is one which I shall never forget, and that while I live I shall be proud of its remembrance, you must well know. I believe I shall never hear the name of this capital of Scotland without a thrill of gratitude and pleasure. I shall love while I have life her people, her hills, and her houses, and even the very stones of her streets. And if in the future works which may lie before me you should discern —God grant you may!—a brighter spirit and a clearer wit, I pray you to refer it back to this night, and point to that as a Scottish passage for evermore. I thank you again and again, with the energy of a thousand thanks in each one, and I drink to you with a heart as full as my glass, and far easier emptied, I do assure you.

[Later in the evening, in proposing the health of Professor Wilson, Mr. Dickens said:]

I have the honour to be entrusted with a toast, the very mention of which will recommend itself to you, I know, as one possessing no ordinary claims to your sympathy and approbation, and the proposing of which is as congenial to my wishes and feelings as its acceptance must be to yours. It is the health of our Chairman, and coupled with his name I have to propose the literature of Scotland—a literature which he has done much to render famous through the world, and of which he has been for many years—as I hope and believe he will be for many more—a most brilliant and distinguished ornament. Who can revert to the literature of the land of Scott and of

Burns without having directly in his mind, as inseparable from the subject and foremost in the picture, that old man of might, with his lion heart and sceptred crutch—Christopher North. I am glad to remember the time when I believed him to be a real, actual, veritable old gentleman, that might be seen any day hobbling along the High Street with the most brilliant eye—but that is no fiction—and the greyest hair in all the world—who wrote not because he cared to write, not because he cared for the wonder and admiration of his fellow-men, but who wrote because he could not help it, because there was always springing up in his mind a clear and sparkling stream of poetry which must have vent, and like the glittering fountain in the fairy tale, draw what you might, was ever at the full, and never languished even by a single drop or bubble. I had so figured him in my mind, and when I saw the Professor two days ago, striding along the Parliament House, I was disposed to take it as a personal offence—I was vexed to see him look so hearty. I drooped to see twenty Christophers in one. I began to think that Scottish life was all light and no shadows, and I began to doubt that beautiful book to which I have turned again and again, always to find new beauties and fresh sources of interest.

[In proposing the memory of the late Sir David Wilkie, Mr. Dickens said:]

Less fortunate than the two gentlemen who have preceded me, it is confided to me to mention a name which cannot be pronounced without sorrow, a name in which Scotland had a great triumph, and which England delighted to honour. One of the gifted of the earth has passed away, as it were yesterday; one who was devoted to his art, and his art was nature—I mean David Wilkie.* He was one who made the cottage hearth a graceful thing—of whom it might truly be said that he found "books in the running brooks," and who has left in all he did some breathing of the air which stirs the heather. But

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*Sir David Wilkie died at sea, on board the Oriental, off Gibraltar, on the 1st of June, 1841, while on his way back to England. During the evening of the same day his body was committed to the deep. —Ed.

however desirous to enlarge on his genius as an artist, I would rather speak of him now as a friend who has gone from amongst us. There is his deserted studio—the empty easel lying idly by—the unfinished picture with its face turned to the wall, and there is that bereaved sister, who loved him with an affection which death cannot quench. He has left a name in fame clear as the bright sky; he has filled our minds with memories pure as the blue waves which roll over him. Let us hope that she who more than all others mourns his loss, may learn to reflect that he died in the fulness of his fame, before age or sickness had dimmed his powers—and that she may yet associate with feelings as calm and pleasant as we do now the memory of Wilkie.

II.

February 1, 1842.

[At a dinner given to Mr. Dickens by the young men of Boston. The company consisted of about two hundred, among whom were George Bancroft, Washington Allston, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. The toast of "Health, happiness, and a hearty welcome to Charles Dickens," having been proposed by the chairman, Mr. Quincy, and received with great applause, Mr. Dickens responded with the following address:]

Gentlemen—If you had given this splendid entertainment to any one else in the whole wide world—if I were to-night to exult in the triumph of my dearest friend—if I stood here upon my defence, to repel any unjust attack—to appeal as a stranger to your generosity and kindness as the freest people on the earth—I could, putting some restraint upon myself, stand among you as self-possessed and unmoved as I should be alone in my own room in England. But when I have the echoes of your cordial greeting ringing in my ears; when I see your kind faces beaming a welcome so warm and earnest as never man had—I feel, it is my nature, so vanquished and subdued, that I have hardly fortitude enough to thank you. If your President, instead of pouring forth that delightful mixture of humour and pathos which you have just heard with so much delight, had been but a caustic, ill-natured man—if he had only been a dull one—if I could only have doubted or distrusted him or you, I should have had my

wits at my fingers' ends, and, using them, could have held you at arm's length. But you have given me no such opportunity; you take advantage of me in the tenderest point; you give me no chance of playing at company, or holding you at a distance, but flock about me like a host of brothers, and make this place like home. Indeed, gentlemen, indeed, if it be natural and allowable for each of us, on his own hearth, to express his thoughts in the most homely fashion, and to appear in his plainest garb, I have a fair claim upon you to let me do so to-night, for you have made my house an Aladdin's Palace. You fold so tenderly within your breasts that common household lamp in which my feeble fire is all enshrined, and at which my flickering torch is lighted up, that straight my household gods take wing, and are transported there. And whereas it is written of that fairy structure that it never moved without two shocks—one when it rose, and one when it settled down—I can say of mine that, however sharp a tug it took to pluck it from its native ground, it struck at once an easy, and a deep and lasting root into this soil; and loved it as its own. I can say more of it, and say with truth, that long before it moved, or had a chance of moving, its master—perhaps from some secret sympathy between its timbers, and a certain stately tree that has its being hereabout, and spreads its broad branches far and wide—dreamed by day and night, for years, of setting foot upon this shore, and breathing this pure air. And, trust me, gentlemen, that, if I had wandered here, unknowing and unknown, I would—if I know my own heart—have come with all my sympathies clustering as richly about this land and people—with all my sense of justice as keenly alive to their high claims on every man who loves God's image—with all my energies as fully bent on judging for myself, and speaking out, and telling in my sphere the truth, as I do now, when you rain down your welcomes on my head.

Your President has alluded to those writings which have been my occupation for some years past; and you have received his allusions in a manner which assures me—if I needed any such assurance—that we are old friends in the spirit, and have been in close communion for a long time.

It is not easy for a man to speak of his own books. I

dare say that few persons have been more interested in mine than I, and if it be a general principle in nature that a lover's love is blind, and that a mother's love is blind, I believe it may be said of an author's attachment to the creatures of his own imagination, that it is a perfect model of constancy and devotion, and is the blindest of all. But the objects and purposes I have had in view are very plain and simple, and may be easily told. I have always had, and always shall have, an earnest and true desire to contribute, as far as in me lies, to the common stock of healthful cheerfulness and enjoyment. I have always had, and always shall have, an invincible repugnance to that mole-eyed philosophy which loves the darkness, and winks and scowls in the light. I believe that Virtue shows quite as well in rags and patches, as she does in purple and fine linen. I believe that she and every beautiful object in external nature claim some sympathy in the breast of the poorest man who breaks his scanty loaf of daily bread. I believe that she goes barefoot as well as shod. I believe that she dwells rather oftener in alleys and by-ways than she does in courts and palaces, and that it is good, and pleasant, and profitable to track her out, and follow her. I believe that to lay one's hand upon some of those rejected ones whom the world has too long forgotten, and too often misused, and to say to the proudest and most thoughtless—"These creatures have the same elements and capacities of goodness as yourselves, they are moulded in the same form, and made of the same clay; and though ten times worse than you, may, in having retained anything of their original nature amidst the trials and distresses of their condition, be really ten times better"; I believe that to do this is to pursue a worthy and not useless vocation. Gentlemen, that you think so too, your fervent greeting sufficiently assures me. That this feeling is alive in the Old World as well as in the New, no man should know better than I—I, who have found such wide and ready sympathy in my own dear land. That in expressing it, we are but treading in the steps of those great master-spirits who have gone before, we know by reference to all the bright examples in our literature, from Shakespeare downward.

There is one other point connected with the labours (if I may call them so) that you hold in such generous es-

teem, to which I cannot help adverting. I cannot help expressing the delight, the more than happiness it was to me to find so strong an interest awakened on this side of the water, in favour of that little heroine of mine, to whom your President has made allusion, who died in her youth. I had letters about that child, in England, from the dwellers in log-houses among the morasses, and swamps, and densest forests, and deepest solitudes of the Far West. Many a sturdy hand, hard with the axe and spade, and browned by the summer's heat, has taken up the pen, and written to me a little history of domestic joy or sorrow, always coupled, I am proud to say, with something of interest in that little tale, or some comfort or happiness derived from it, and my correspondent has always addressed me, not as a writer of books for sale, resident some four or five thousand miles away, but as a friend to whom he might freely impart the joys and sorrows of his own fireside. Many a mother—I could reckon them now by dozens, not by units—has done the like, and has told me how she lost such a child at such a time, and where she lay buried, and how good she was, and how, in this or that respect, she resembled Nell. I do assure you that no circumstance of my life has given me one hundredth part of the gratification I have derived from this source. I was wavering at the time whether or not to wind up my Clock,* and come and see this country, and this decided me. I felt as if it were a positive duty, as if I were bound to pack up my clothes, and come and see my friends; and even now I have such an odd sensation in connection with these things, that you have no chance of spoiling me. I feel as though we were agreeing—as indeed we are, if we substitute for fictitious characters the classes from which they are drawn—about third parties, in whom we had a common interest. At every new act of kindness on your part, I say to myself "That's for Oliver; I should not wonder if that were meant for Smike; I have no doubt that is intended for Nell"; and so I become a much happier, certainly, but a more sober and retiring man than ever I was before.

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*"Master Humphrey's Clock," under which title the two novels of "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge" orginally appeared.—Ed.

Gentlemen, talking of my friends in America, brings me back, naturally and of course, to you. Coming back to you, and being thereby reminded of the pleasure we have in store in hearing the gentlemen who sit about me, I arrive by the easiest, though not by the shortest course in the world, at the end of what I have to say. But before I sit down, there is one topic on which I am desirous to lay particular stress. It has, or should have, a strong interest for us all, since to its literature every country must look for one great means of refining and improving its people, and one great source of national pride and honour. You have in America great writers—great writers—who will live in all time, and are as familiar to our lips as household words. Deriving (as they all do in a greater or less degree, in their several walks) their inspiration from the stupendous country that gave them birth, they diffuse a better knowledge of it, and a higher love for it, all over the civilized world. I take leave to say, in the presence of some of those gentlemen, that I hope the time is not far distant when they, in America, will receive of right some substantial profit and return in England from their labours; and when we, in England, shall receive some substantial profit and return in America for ours. Pray do not misunderstand me. Securing to myself from day to day the means of an honourable subsistence, I would rather have the affectionate regard of my fellow-men, than I would have heaps and mines of gold. But the two things do not seem incompatible. They cannot be, for nothing good is incompatible with justice. There must be an international arrangement in this respect: England has done her part, and I am confident that the time is not far distant when America will do hers. It becomes the character of a great country; *firstly* because it is justice; *secondly*, because without it you never can have, and keep, a literature of your own.

Gentlemen, I thank you with feelings of gratitude, such as are not often awakened, and can never be expressed. As I understand it to be the pleasant custom here to finish with a toast, I would beg to give you: America and England, and may they never have any division but the Atlantic between them.

III.

Hartford, *February* 7, 1842

Gentlemen—To say that I thank you for the earnest manner in which you have drunk the toast just now so eloquently proposed to you—to say that I give you back your kind wishes and good feelings with more than compound interest; and that I feel how dumb and powerless the best acknowledgments would be beside such genial hospitality as yours, is nothing. To say that in this winter season, flowers have sprung up in every footstep's length of the path which has brought me here; that no country ever smiled more pleasantly than yours has smiled on me, and that I have rarely looked upon a brighter summer prospect than that which lies before me now,* is nothing.

But it is something to be no stranger in a strange place—to feel, sitting at a board for the first time, the ease and affection of an old guest, and to be at once on such intimate terms with the family as to have a homely, genuine interest in its every member—it is, I say, something to be in this novel and happy frame of mind. And, as it is of your creation, and owes its being to you, I have no reluctance in urging it as a reason why, in addressing you, I should not so much consult the form and fashion of my speech, as I should employ that universal language of the heart, which you, and such as you, best teach, and best can understand. Gentlemen, in that universal language—common to you in America, and to us in England, as that younger mother-tongue, which, by the means of, and through the happy union of, our two great countries, shall be spoken ages hence, by land and sea, over the wide surface of the globe—I thank you.

I had occasion to say the other night in Boston, as I have more than once had occasion to remark before, that

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*"I shall always entertain a very pleasant and grateful recollection of Hartford. It is a lovely place, and I had many friends there, whom I can never remember with indifference. We left it with no little regret."—Dickens, in "American Notes."

it is not easy for an author to speak of his own books. If the task be a difficult one at any time, its difficulty, certainly, is not diminished when a frequent recurrence to the same theme has left one nothing new to say. Still, I feel that, in a company like this, and especially after what has been said by the President, I ought not to pass lightly ver those labours of love, which, if they had no other merit, have been the happy means of bringing us together.

It has been often observed that you cannot judge of an author's personal character from his writings. It may be that you cannot. I think it very likely, for many reasons, that you cannot. But, at least, a reader will rise from the perusal of a book with some defined and tangible idea of the writer's moral creed and broad purposes, if he has any at all; and it is probable enough that he may like to have his idea confirmed from the author's lips, or dissipated by his explanation. Gentlemen, my moral creed—which is a very wide and comprehensive one, and includes all sects and parties—is very easily summed up. I have faith, and I wish to diffuse faith in the existence—yes, of beautiful things, even in those conditions of society, which are so degenerate, degraded, and forlorn, that, at first sight, it would seem as though they could not be described but by a strange and terrible reversal of the words of Scripture, "God said, Let there be light, and there was none." I take it that we are born, and that we hold our sympathies, hopes, and energies, in trust for the many, and not for the few. That we cannot hold in too strong a light of disgust and contempt, before the view of others, all meanness, falsehood, cruelty, and oppression, of every grade and kind. Above all, that nothing is high, because it is in a high place; and that nothing is low, because it is in a low one. This is the lesson taught us in the great book of nature. This is the lesson which may be read, alike in the bright track of the stars, and in the dusty course of the poorest thing that drags its tiny length upon the ground. This is the lesson ever uppermost in the thoughts of that inspired man, who tells us that there are

> Tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

Gentlemen, keeping these objects steadily before me, I am at no loss to refer your favour and your generous hospitality back to the right source. While I know, on the one hand, that if, instead of being what it is, this were a land of tyranny and wrong, I should care very little for your smiles or frowns, so I am sure upon the other, that if, instead of being what I am, I were the greatest genius that ever trod the earth, and had diverted myself for the oppression and degradation of mankind, you would despise and reject me. I hope you will, whenever, through such means, I give you the opportunity. Trust me, that, whenever you give me the like occasion, I will return the compliment with interest.

Gentlemen, as I have no secrets from you, in the spirit of confidence you have engendered between us, and as I have made a kind of compact with myself that I never will, while I remain in America, omit an opportunity of referring to a topic in which I and all others of my class on both sides of the water are equally interested —equally interested, there is no difference between us— I would beg leave to whisper in your ear two words: *International Copyright.* I use them in no sordid sense, believe me, and those who know me best, best know that. For myself, I would rather that my children, coming after me, trudged in the mud, and knew by the general feeling of society that their father was beloved, and had been of some use, than I would have them ride in their carriages, and know by their banker's books that he was rich. But I do not see, I confess, why one should be obliged to make the choice, or why fame, besides playing that delightful *réveil* for which she is so justly celebrated, should not blow out of her trumpet a few notes of a different kind from those with which she has hitherto contented herself.

It was well observed the other night by a beautiful speaker whose words went to the heart of every man who heard him, that, if there had existed any law in this respect, Scott might not have sunk beneath the mighty pressure on his brain, but might have lived to add new creatures of his fancy to the crowd which swarm about you in your summer walks, and gather round your winter evening hearths.

As I listened to his words, there came back, fresh upon

me, that touching scene in the great man's life, when he lay upon his couch, surrounded by his family, and listened, for the last time, to the rippling of the river he had so well loved, over its stony bed. I pictured him to myself, faint, wan, dying, crushed both in mind and body by his honourable struggle, and hovering round him the phantoms of his own imagination—Waverley, Ravenswood, Jeanie Deans, Rob Roy, Caleb Balderstone, Dominie Sampson—all the familiar throng—with cavaliers, and Puritans, and Highland chiefs innumerable overflowing the chamber, and fading away in the dim distance beyond. I pictured them, fresh from traversing the world, and hanging down their heads in shame and sorrow, that, from all those lands into which they had carried gladness, instruction, and delight for millions, they brought him not one friendly hand to help to raise him from that sad, sad bed. No, nor brought him from that land in which his own language was spoken, and in every house and hut of which his own books were read in his own tongue, one grateful dollar-piece to buy a garland for his grave. Oh! if every man who goes from here, as many do, to look upon that tomb in Dryburgh Abbey, would but remember this, and bring the recollection home!

Gentlemen, I thank you again, and once again, and many times to that. You have given me a new reason for remembering this day, which is already one of mark in my calendar, it being my birthday; and you have given those who are nearest and dearest to me a new reason for recollecting it with pride and interest. Heaven knows that, although I should grow ever so grey, I shall need nothing to remind me of this epoch in my life. But I am glad to think that from this time you are inseparably connected with every recurrence of this day; and, that on its periodical return, I shall always, in imagination, have the unfading pleasure of entertaining you as my guests, in return for the gratification you have afforded me to-night.

IV.

New York, *February* 18, 1842.

[At a dinner presided over by Washington Irving, when nearly eight hundred of the most distinguished citizens of New York were present, "Charles Dickens, the Literary Guest of the Nation," having been "proffered as a sentiment" by the Chairman, Mr. Dickens rose, and spoke as follows:]

Gentlemen—I don't know how to thank you—I really don't know how. You would naturally suppose that my former experience would have given me this power, and that the difficulties in my way would have been diminished; but I assure you the fact is exactly the reverse, and I have completely baulked the ancient proverb that "a rolling stone gathers no moss"; and in my progress to this city I have collected such a weight of obligations and acknowledgment—I have picked up such an enormous mass of fresh moss at every point, and was so struck by the brilliant scenes of Monday night, that I thought I could never by any possibility grow any bigger. I have made, continually, new accumulations to such an extent that I am compelled to stand still, and can roll no more!

Gentlemen, we learn from the authorities, that, when fairy stones, or balls, or rolls of thread, stopped of their own accord—as I do not—it presaged some great catastrophe near at hand. The precedent holds good in this case. When I have remembered the short time I have before me to spend in this land of mighty interests, and the poor opportunity I can at best have of acquiring a knowledge of, and forming an acquaintance with it, I have felt it almost a duty to decline the honours you so generously heap upon me, and pass more quietly among you. For Argus himself, though he had but one mouth for his hundred eyes, would have found the reception of a public entertainment once a week too much for his greatest activity; and, as I would lose no scrap of the rich instruction and the delightful knowledge which meet me on every hand (and already I have gleaned a great deal from your hospitals and common jails),—I have resolved to take up my staff, and go my way rejoicing, and for the future to shake hands with America, not at parties but at home; and therefore, gentlemen, I say to-night, with

a full heart, and an honest purpose, and grateful feelings, that I bear, and shall ever bear, a deep sense of your kind, your affectionate, and your noble greeting, which it is utterly impossible to convey in words. No European sky without, and no cheerful home or well-warmed room within, shall ever shut out this land from my vision. I shall often hear your words of welcome in my quiet room, and oftenest when most quiet; and shall see your faces in the blazing fire. If I should live to grow old, the scenes of this and other evenings will shine as brightly to my dull eyes fifty years hence as now; and the honours you bestow upon me shall be well remembered and paid back in my undying love, and honest endeavours for the good of my race.

Gentlemen, one other word with reference to this first person singular, and then I shall close. I came here in an open, honest, and confiding spirit, if ever man did, and because I felt a deep sympathy in your land; had I felt otherwise, I should have kept away. As I came here, and *am* here, without the least admixture of one-hundredth part of one grain of base alloy, without one feeling of unworthy reference to self in any respect, I claim, in regard to the past, for the last time, my right in reason, in truth, and in justice, to approach, as I have done on two former occasions, a question of literary interest. I claim that justice be done; and I prefer this claim as one who has a right to speak and be heard. I have only to add that I shall be as true to you as you have been to me. I recognize in your enthusiastic approval of the creatures of my fancy, your enlightened care for the happiness of the many, your tender regard for the afflicted, your sympathy for the downcast, your plans for correcting and improving the bad, and for encouraging the good; and to advance these great objects shall be, to the end of my life, my earnest endeavour, to the extent of my humble ability. Having said this much with reference to myself, I shall have the pleasure of saying a few words with reference to somebody else.

There is in this city a gentleman who, at the reception of one of my books—I well remember it was "The Old Curiosity Shop"—wrote to me in England a letter so generous, so affectionate, and so manly, that if I had written the book under every circumstance of disappoint-

ment, of discouragement, and difficulty, instead of the reverse, I should have found in the receipt of that letter my best and most happy reward. I answered him, and he answered me, and so we kept shaking hands autographically, as if no ocean rolled between us. I came here to this city eager to see him, and [*laying his hand upon Irving's shoulder*] here he sits! I need not tell you how happy and delighted I am to see him here to-night in this capacity.

Washington Irving! Why, gentlemen, I don't go upstairs to bed two nights out of the seven—as a very creditable witness near at hand can testify—I say I do not go to bed two nights out of the seven without taking Washington Irving under my arm: and, when I don't take him, I take his own brother, Oliver Goldsmith. Washington Irving! Why, of whom but him was I thinking the other day when I came up by the Hog's Back, the Frying Pan, Hell Gate, and all these places? Why, when, not long ago, I visited Shakespeare's birthplace, and went beneath the roof where he first saw light, whose name but *his* was pointed out to me upon the wall? Washington Irving—Diedrich Knickerbocker—Geoffrey Crayon—why, where can you go that they have not been there before? Is there an English farm—is there an English stream, an English city, or an English country-seat, where they have not been? Is there no Bracebridge Hall in existence? Has it no ancient shades or quiet streets?

In bygone times, when Irving left that Hall, he left sitting in an old oak chair, in a small parlour of the Boar's Head, a little man with a red nose and an oilskin hat. When I came away he was sitting there still!—not a man *like* him, but the same man—with the nose of immortal redness and the hat of an undying glaze! Crayon, while there, was on terms of intimacy with a certain radical fellow, who used to go about, with a hatful of newspapers, wofully out at elbows, and with a coat of great antiquity. Why, gentlemen, I know that man—Tibbles the elder, and he has not changed a hair; and, when I came away, he charged me to give his best respects to Washington Irving!

Leaving the town and the rustic life of England—forgetting this man, if we can—putting out of mind the

country churchyard and the broken heart—let us cross the water again, and ask who has associated himself most closely with the Italian peasantry and the bandits of the Pyrenees? When the traveller enters his little chamber beyond the Alps—listening to the dim echoes of the long passages and spacious corridors—damp, and gloomy, and cold—as he hears the tempest beating with fury against his window, and gazes at the curtains, dark, and heavy, and covered with mould—and when all the ghost-stories that ever were told come up before him—amid all his thick-coming fancies, whom does he think of? Washington Irving.

Go farther still: go to the Moorish fountains, sparkling full in the moonlight—go among the water-carriers and the village gossips, living still as in days of old—and who has travelled among them before you, and peopled the Alhambra and made eloquent its shadows? Who awakes there a voice from every hill and in every cavern, and bids legends, which for centuries have slept a dreamless sleep, or watched unwinkingly, start up and pass before you in all their life and glory?

But leaving this again, who embarked with Columbus upon his gallant ship, traversed with him the dark and mighty ocean, leaped upon the land and planted there the flag of Spain, but this same man, now sitting by my side? And being here at home again, who is a more fit companion for money-diggers? and what pen but his has made Rip Van Winkle, playing at nine-pins on that thundering afternoon, as much part and parcel of the Catskill Mountains as any tree or crag that they can boast?

But these are topics familiar from my boyhood, and which I am apt to pursue; and lest I should be tempted now to talk too long about them, I will, in conclusion, give you a sentiment, most appropriate, I am sure, in the presence of such writers as Bryant, Halleck, and —but I suppose I must not mention the ladies here—

THE LITERATURE OF AMERICA:

She well knows how to do honour to her own literature and to that of other lands, when she chooses Washington Irving for her representative in the country of Cervantes.

V.

Manchester, *October* 5, 1843.

[This address was delivered at a Soirée of the members of the Manchester Athenæum, at which Mr. Dickens presided. Among the other speakers on the occasion were Mr. Cobden and Mr. Disraeli.]

Ladies and Gentlemen—I am sure I need scarcely tell you that I am very proud and happy; and that I take it as a great distinction to be asked to come amongst you on an occasion such as this, when, even with the brilliant and beautiful spectacle which I see before me, I can hail it as the most brilliant and beautiful circumstance of all, that we assemble together here, even here, upon neutral ground, where we have no more knowledge of party difficulties, or public animosities between side and side, or between man and man, than if we were a public meeting in the commonwealth of Utopia.

Ladies and gentlemen, upon this, and upon a hundred other grounds, this assembly is not less interesting to me, believe me—although, personally, almost a stranger here—than it is interesting to you; and I take it, that it is not of greater importance to all of us than it is to every man who has learned to know that he has an interest in the moral and social elevation, the harmless relaxation, the peace, happiness, and improvement, of the community at large. Not even those who saw the first foundation of your Athenæum laid, and watched its progress, as I know they did, almost as tenderly as if it were the progress of a living creature, until it reared its beautiful front, an honour to the town—not even they, nor even you who, within its walls, have tasted its usefulness, and put it to the proof, have greater reason, I am persuaded, to exult in its establishment, or to hope that it may thrive and prosper, than scores of thousands at a distance, who—whether consciously or unconsciously, matters not—have, in the principle of its success and bright example, a deep and personal concern.

It well becomes, particularly well becomes, this enterprising town, this little world of labour, that she should stand out foremost in the foremost rank in such a cause.

It well becomes her that, among her numerous and noble public institutions, she should have a splendid temple sacred to the education and improvement of a large class of those who, in their various useful stations, assist in the production of our wealth, and in rendering her name famous through the world. I think it is grand to know, that, while her factories re-echo with the clanking of stupendous engines, and the whirl and rattle of machinery, the immortal mechanism of God's own hand, the mind, is not forgotten, in the din and uproar, but is lodged and tended in a palace of its own. That it is a structure deeply fixed and rooted in the public spirit of this place, and built to last, I have no more doubt, judging from the spectacle I see before me, and from what I know of its brief history, than I have of the reality of these walls that hem us in, and the pillars that spring up about us.

You are perfectly well aware, I have no doubt, that the Athenæum was projected at a time when commerce was in a vigorous and flourishing condition, and when those classes of society to which it particularly addresses itself were fully employed, and in the receipt of regular incomes. A season of depression almost without a parallel ensued, and large numbers of young men employed in warehouses and offices suddenly found their occupation gone, and themselves reduced to very straitened and penurious circumstances. This altered state of things led, as I am told, to the compulsory withdrawal of many of the members, to a proportionate decrease in the expected funds, and to the incurrence of a debt of £3000. By the very great zeal and energy of all concerned, and by the liberality of those to whom they applied for help, that debt is now in rapid course of being discharged. A little more of the same indefatigable exertion on the one hand, and a little more of the same community of feeling upon the other, and there will be no such thing; the figures will be blotted out for good and all, and, from that time, the Athenæum may be said to belong to you, and to your heirs for ever.

But, ladies and gentlemen, at all times, now in its most thriving, and in its least flourishing condition—here, with its cheerful rooms, its pleasant and instructive lectures, its improving library of 6000 volumes, its classes for the study of the foreign languages, elocution, music; its

opportunities of discussion and debate, of healthful bodily exercise, and, though last not least—for by this I set great store, as a very novel and excellent provision—its opportunities of blameless, rational enjoyment, here it is, open to every youth and man in this great town, accessible to every bee in this vast hive, who, for all these benefits, and the inestimable ends to which they lead, can set aside one sixpence weekly. I do look upon the reduction of the subscription, and upon the fact that the number of members has considerably more than doubled within the last twelve months, as strides in the path of the very best civilisation, and chapters of rich promise in the history of mankind.

I do not know whether, at this time of day, and with such a prospect before us, we need trouble ourselves very much to rake up the ashes of the dead-and-gone objections that were wont to be urged by men of all parties against institutions such as this, whose interests we are met to promote; but their philosophy was always to be summed up in the unmeaning application of one short sentence. How often have we heard from a large class of men wise in their generation, who would really seem to be born and bred for no other purpose than to pass into currency counterfeit and mischievous scraps of wisdom, as it is the sole pursuit of some other criminals to utter base coin—how often have we heard from them, as an all-convincing argument, that "a little learning is a dangerous thing"? Why, a little hanging was considered a very dangerous thing, according to the same authorities, with this difference, that, because a little hanging was dangerous, we had a great deal of it; and, because a little learning was dangerous, we were to have none at all. Why, when I hear such cruel absurdities gravely reiterated, I do sometimes begin to doubt whether the parrots of society are not more pernicious to its interests than its birds of prey. I should be glad to hear such people's estimate of the comparative danger of "a little learning" and a vast amount of ignorance; I should be glad to know which they consider the most prolific parent of misery and crime. Descending a little lower in the social scale, I should be glad to assist them in their calculations, by carrying them into certain jails and nightly refuges I know of, where my own heart dies within me,

when I see thousands of immortal creatures condemned, without alternative or choice, to tread, not what our great poet calls the "primrose path" to the everlasting bonfire, but one of jagged flints and stones, laid down by brutal ignorance, and held together, like the solid rocks, by years of this most wicked axiom.

Would we know from any honourable body of merchants, upright in deed and thought, whether they would rather have ignorant or enlightened persons in their own employment? Why, we have had their answer in this building; we have it in this company; we have it emphatically given in the munificent generosity of your own merchants of Manchester, of all sects and kinds, when this establishment was first proposed. But are the advantages derivable by the people from institutions such as this only of a negative character? If a little learning be an innocent thing, has it no distinct, wholesome, and immediate influence upon the mind? The old doggerel rhyme, so often written in the beginning of books, says that

> When house and lands are gone and spent,
> Then learning is most excellent;

but I should be strongly disposed to reform the adage, and say that:

> Though house and lands be never got,
> Learning can give what they can*not*.

And this I know, that the first unpurchasable blessing earned by every man who makes an effort to improve himself in such a place as the Athenæum is self-respect —an inward dignity of character, which, once acquired and righteously maintained, nothing—no, not the hardest drudgery, nor the direst poverty—can vanquish. Though he should find it hard for a season even to keep the wolf —hunger—from his door, let him but once have chased the dragon—ignorance—from his hearth, and self-respect and hope are left him. You could no more deprive him of those sustaining qualities by loss or destruction of his worldly goods, than you could, by plucking out his eyes, take from him an internal consciousness of the bright glory of the sun.

The man who lives from day to day by the daily exer-

cise in his sphere of hands or head, and seeks to improve himself in such a place as the Athenæum, acquires for himself that property of soul which has in all times upheld struggling men of every degree, but self-made men especially and always. He secures to himself that faithful companion which, while it has ever lent the light of its countenance to men of rank and eminence who have deserved it, has ever shed its brightest consolations on men of low estate and almost hopeless means. It took its patient seat beside Sir Walter Raleigh in his dungeon study in the Tower; it laid its head upon the block with More; but it did not disdain to watch the stars with Ferguson, the shepherd's boy; it walked the streets in mean attire with Crabbe; it was a poor barber here in Lancashire with Arkwright; it was a tallow-chandler's son with Franklin; it worked at shoemaking with Bloomfield in his garret; it followed the plough with Burns; and, high above the noise of loom and hammer, it whispers courage even at this day in ears I could name in Sheffield and in Manchester.

The more the man who improves his leisure in such a place learns, the better, gentler, kinder man he must become. When he knows how much great minds have suffered for the truth in every age and time, and to what dismal persecutions opinion has been exposed, he will become tolerant of other men's belief in all matters, and will incline more leniently to their sentiments when they chance to differ from his own. Understanding that the relations between himself and his employers involve a mutual duty and responsibility, he will discharge his part of the implied contract cheerfully, satisfactorily, and honourably; for the history of every useful life warns him to shape his course in that direction.

The benefits he acquires in such a place are not of a selfish kind, but extend themselves to his home, and to those whom it contains. Something of what he hears or reads within such walls can scarcely fail to become at times a topic of discourse by his own fireside, nor can it ever fail to lead to larger sympathies with man, and to a higher veneration for the great Creator of all the wonders of this universe. It appeals to his home and his homely feeling in other ways; for at certain times he carries there his wife and daughter, or his sister, or, possibly, some

bright-eyed acquaintance of a more tender description. Judging from what I see before me, I think it is very likely; I am sure I would if I could. He takes her there to enjoy a pleasant evening, to be gay and happy. Sometimes it may possibly happen that he dates his tenderness from the Athenæum. I think that it is a very excellent thing, too, and not the least among the advantages of the institution. In any case, I am sure the number of bright eyes and beaming faces which greet this meeting to-night by their presence will never be among the least of its excellences in my recollection.

Ladies and gentlemen, I shall not easily forget this scene, the pleasing task your favour has devolved upon me, or the strong and inspiring confirmation I have to-night of all the hopes and reliances I have ever placed upon institutions of this nature. In the latter point of view —in their bearing upon this latter point—I regard them as of great importance, deeming that the more intelligent and reflective society in the mass becomes, and the more readers there are, the more distinctly writers of all kinds will be able to throw themselves upon the truthful feeling of the people, and the more honoured and the more useful literature must be. At the same time, I must confess that, if there had been an Athenæum, and if the people had been readers, years ago, some leaves of dedication in your library, of praise of patrons which was very cheaply bought, very dearly sold, and very marketably haggled for by the groat, would be blank leaves, and posterity might probably have lacked the information that certain monsters of virtue ever had existence. But it is upon a much better and wider scale, let me say it once again—it is in the effect of such institutions upon the great social system, and the peace and happiness of mankind, that I delight to contemplate them; and, in my heart, I am quite certain that long after your institution, and others of the same nature, have crumbled into dust, the noble harvest of the seed sown in them will shine out brightly in the wisdom, the mercy, and the forbearance of another race.

VI.

Liverpool, *February* 26, 1844.

[The following address was delivered at a Soirée of the Liverpool Mechanics' Institution, at which Mr. Dickens presided:]

Ladies and Gentlemen—It was rather hard of you to take away my breath before I spoke a word; but I would not thank you, even if I could, for the favour which has set me in this place, or for the generous kindness which has greeted me so warmly—because my first strong impulse still would be, although I had that power, to lose sight of all personal considerations in the high intent and meaning of this numerous assemblage, in the contemplation of the noble objects to which this building is devoted, of its brilliant and inspiring history, of that rough, upward track, so bravely trodden, which it leaves behind, and that bright path of steadily-increasing usefulness which lies stretched out before it. My first strong impulse still would be to exchange congratulations with you, as the members of one united family, on the thriving vigour of this strongest child of a strong race. My first strong impulse still would be, though everybody here had twice as many hundreds of hands as there are hundreds of persons present, to shake them in the spirit, every one, always, allow me to say, excepting those hands (and there are a few such here), which, with the constitutional infirmity of human nature, I would rather salute in some more tender fashion.

When I first had the honour of communicating with your Committee with reference to this celebration, I had some selfish hopes that the visit proposed to me might turn out to be one of congratulation, or, at least, of solicitous inquiry; for they who receive a visitor in any season of distress are easily touched and moved by what he says, and I entertained some confident expectation of making a mighty strong impression on you. But, when I came to look over the printed documents which were forwarded to me at the same time, and with which you are all tolerably familiar, these anticipations very speedily vanished, and left me bereft of all consolation, but the triumphant feeling to which I have referred. For what do I find, on looking over those brief chronicles of this

swift conquest over ignorance and prejudice, in which no blood has been poured out, and no treaty signed but that one sacred compact which recognizes the just right of every man, whatever his belief, or however humble his degree, to aspire, and to have some means of aspiring, to be a better and a wiser man? I find that, in 1825, certain misguided and turbulent persons proposed to erect in Liverpool an unpopular, dangerous, irreligious, and revolutionary establishment, called a Mechanics' Institution; that, in 1835, Liverpool having, somehow or other, got on pretty comfortably in the meantime, in spite of it, the first stone of a new and spacious edifice was laid; that, in 1837, it was opened, that it was afterwards, at different periods, considerably enlarged; that, in 1844, conspicuous amongst the public beauties of a beautiful town, here it stands triumphant, its enemies lived down, its former students attesting, in their various useful callings and pursuits, the sound, practical information it afforded them; its members numbering considerably more than 3000, and setting in rapidly for 6000 at least; its library comprehending 11,000 volumes, and daily sending forth its hundreds of books into private houses; its staff of masters and officers, amounting to half-a-hundred in themselves; its schools, conveying every sort of instruction, high and low, adapted to the labour, means, exigencies, and convenience of nearly every class and grade of persons. I was here this morning, and in its spacious halls I found stores of the wonders worked by nature in the air, in the forest, in the cavern, and in the sea—stores of the surpassing engines devised by science for the better knowledge of other worlds, and the greater happiness of this—stores of those gentler works of art, which, though achieved in perishable stone, by yet more perishable hands of dust, are in their influence immortal. With such means at their command, so well-directed, so cheaply shared, and so extensively diffused, well may your Committee say, as they have done in one of their Reports, that the success of this establishment has far exceeded their most sanguine expectations.

But, ladies and gentlemen, as that same philosopher whose words they quote, as Bacon tells us, instancing the wonderful effects of little things and small beginnings, that the influence of the loadstone was first discovered

in particles of iron, and not in iron bars, so they may lay it to their hearts, that when they combined together to form the institution which has risen to this majestic height, they issued on a field of enterprise, the glorious end of which they cannot even now discern. Every man who has felt the advantages of, or has received improvement in this place, carries its benefits into the society in which he moves, and puts them out at compound interest; and what the blessed sum may be at last, no man can tell. Ladies and gentlemen, with that Christian prelate whose name appears on your list of honorary Members; that good and liberal man who once addressed you within these walls, in a spirit worthy of his calling, and of his High Master—I look forward from this place, as from a tower, to the time when high and low, and rich and poor, shall mutually assist, improve, and educate each other.

I feel, ladies and gentlemen, that this is not a place, with its 3200 members, and at least 3200 arguments in every one, to enter on any advocacy of the principle of Mechanics' Institutions, or to discuss the subject with those who do or ever did object to them. I should as soon think of arguing the point with those untutored savages whose mode of life you last year had the opportunity of witnessing; indeed, I am strongly inclined to believe them by far the more rational class of the two. Moreover, if the institution itself be not a sufficient answer to all such objections, then there is no such thing in fact or reason, human or divine. Neither will I venture to enter into these details of the management of this place which struck me most on the perusal of its papers; but I cannot help saying how much impressed and gratified I was, as everybody must be who comes to their perusal for the first time, by the extraordinary munificence with which this institution has been endowed by certain gentlemen.

Amongst the peculiar features of management which made the greatest impression on me, I may observe that that regulation which empowers fathers, being annual subscribers of one guinea, to introduce their sons who are minors; and masters, on payment of the astoundingly small sum of five shillings annually, in like manner their apprentices, is not the least valuable of its privileges; and, certainly not the one least valuable to society. And, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot say to you what pleasure

I derived from the perusal of an apparently excellent report in your local papers of a meeting held here, some short time since, in aid of the formation of a girls' school in connection with this institution. This is a new and striking chapter in the history of these institutions; it does equal credit to the gallantry and policy of this, and disposes one to say of it with a slight parody on the words of Burns, that:

> Its 'prentice han' it tried on man,
> And then it *taught* the lasses, O.

That those who are our best teachers, and whose lessons are oftenest heeded in after life, should be well taught themselves, is a proposition few reasonable men will gainsay; and, certainly, to breed up good husbands on the one hand, and good wives on the other, does appear as reasonable and straightforward a plan as could well be devised for the improvement of the next generation.

This, and what I see before me, naturally brings me to our fairer members, in respect of whom I have no doubt you will agree with me, that they ought to be admitted to the widest possible extent, and on the lowest possible terms; and, ladies, let me venture to say to you, that you never did a wiser thing in all your lives than when you turned your favourable regard on such an establishment as this—for wherever the light of knowledge is diffused, wherever the humanising influence of the arts and sciences extends itself, wherever there is the clearest perception of what is beautiful and good, and most redeeming, amid all the faults and vices of mankind, there your character, your virtues, your graces, your better nature, will be the best appreciated, and there the truest homage will be proudly paid to you. You show best, trust me, in the clearest light; and every ray that falls upon you at your own firesides, from any book or thought communicated within these walls, will raise you nearer to the angels in the eyes you care for most.

I will not longer interpose myself, ladies and gentlemen, between you and the pleasure we all anticipate in hearing other gentlemen, and in enjoying those social pleasures with which it is a main part of the wisdom of this society to adorn and relieve its graver pursuits. We all feel, I am sure, being here, that we are truly interested in the

cause of human improvement and rational education, and that we pledge ourselves, every one as far as in him lies, to extend the knowledge of the benefits afforded in this place, and to bear honest witness in its favour. To those who yet remain without its walls, but have the means of purchasing its advantages, we make appeal, and in a friendly and forbearing spirit say, "Come in, and be convinced—

'Who enters here, leaves *doubt* behind.' "

If you, happily, have been well taught yourself, and are superior to its advantages, so much the more should you make one in sympathy with those who are below you. Beneath this roof we breed the men who, in the time to come, must be found working for good or evil, in every quarter of society. If mutual respect and forbearance among various classes be not found here, where so many men are trained up in so many grades, to enter on so many roads of life, dating their entry from one common starting-point, as they are all approaching, by various paths, one common end, where else can that great lesson be imbibed? Differences of wealth, of rank, of intellect, we know there must be, and we respect them; but we would give to all the means of taking out one patent of nobility, and we define it, in the words of a great living poet, who is one of us, and who uses his great gifts, as he holds them in trust, for the general welfare—

Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good:
True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.*

VII.

London, *April* 6, 1846.

[The first Anniversary Festival of the General Theatrical Fund Association was held on the evening of the above date at the London Tavern. The chair was taken by Mr. Dickens, who thus proposed the principal toast:]

Gentlemen—In offering to you a toast which has not as yet been publicly drunk in any company, it becomes

* Tennyson, "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," then newly published in the collection of 1842.—Ed.

incumbent on me to offer a few words in explanation: in the first place, premising that the toast will be "The General Theatrical Fund."

The Association, whose anniversary we celebrate to-night, was founded seven years ago, for the purpose of granting permanent pensions to such of the *corps dramatique* as had retired from the stage, either from a decline in their years or a decay of their powers. Collected within the scope of its benevolence are all actors and actresses, singers, or dancers, of five years' standing in the profession. To relieve their necessities and to protect them from want is the great end of the Society, and it is good to know that for seven years the members of it have steadily, patiently, quietly, and perseveringly pursued this end, advancing by regular contribution, moneys which many of them could ill afford, and cheered by no external help or assistance of any kind whatsoever. It has thus served a regular apprenticeship, but I trust that we shall establish to-night that its time is out, and that henceforth the Fund will enter upon a flourishing and brilliant career.

I have no doubt that you are all aware that there are, and were when this institution was founded, two other institutions existing of a similar nature—Covent Garden and Drury Lane—both of long standing, both richly endowed. It cannot, however, be too distinctly understood, that the present Institution is not in any way adverse to those. How can it be when it is only a wide and broad extension of all that is most excellent in the principles on which they are founded? That such an extension was absolutely necessary was sufficiently proved by the fact that the great body of the dramatic corps were excluded from the benefits conferred by a membership of either of these institutions; for it was essential, in order to become a member of the Drury Lane Society, that the applicant, either he or she, should have been engaged for three consecutive seasons as a performer. This was afterwards reduced, in the case of Covent Garden, to a period of two years, but it really is as exclusive one way as the other, for I need not tell you that Covent Garden is now but a vision of the past. You might play the bottle conjurer with its dramatic company and put them all into a pint bottle. The human voice is rarely heard

within its walls save in connection with corn, or the ambidextrous prestidigitation of the Wizard of the North. In like manner Drury Lane is conducted now with almost a sole view to the opera and ballet, insomuch that the statue of Shakespeare over the door serves as emphatically to point out his grave as his bust did in the church of Stratford-upon-Avon. How can the profession generally hope to qualify for the Drury Lane or Covent Garden institution, when the oldest and most distinguished members have been driven from the boards on which they have earned their reputations, to delight the town in theatres to which the General Theatrical Fund alone extended?

I will again repeat that I attach no reproach to those other funds, with which I have had the honour of being connected at different periods of my life. At the time those Associations were established, an engagement at one of these theatres was almost a matter of course, and a successful engagement would last a whole life; but an engagement of two months' duration at Covent Garden would be a perfect Old Parr of an engagement just now. It should never be forgotten that when those two funds were established, the two great theatres were protected by patent, and that at that time the minor theatres were condemned by law to the representation of the most preposterous nonsense; and some gentlemen whom I see around me could no more belong to the minor theatres of that day than they could now belong to St. Bartholomew fair.

As I honour the two old funds for the great good which they have done, so I honour this for the much greater good it is resolved to do. It is not because I love them less, but because I love this more—because it includes more in its operation.

Let us ever remember that there is no class of actors who stand so much in need of a retiring fund as those who do not win the great prizes, but who are nevertheless an essential part of the theatrical system, and by consequence bear a part in contributing to our pleasures. We owe them a debt which we ought to pay. The beds of such men are not of roses, but of very artificial flowers indeed. Their lives are lives of care and privation, and hard struggles with very stern realities. It is from among the poor

actors who drink wine from goblets, in colour marvellously like toast and water, and who preside at Barmecide feasts with wonderful appetites for steaks—it is from their ranks that the most triumphant favourites have sprung. And surely, besides this, the greater the instruction and delight we derive from the rich English drama, the more we are bound to succour and protect the humblest of those votaries of the art who add to our instruction and amusement.

Hazlitt has well said that "There is no class of society whom so many persons regard with affection as actors. We greet them on the stage, we like to meet them in the streets; they almost always recall to us pleasant associations." When they have strutted and fretted their hour upon the stage, let them not be heard no more—but let them be heard sometimes to say that they are happy in their old age. When they have passed for the last time from behind that glittering row of lights with which we are all familiar, let them not pass away into gloom and darkness—but let them pass into cheerfulness and light—into a contented and happy home.

This is the object for which we have met; and I am too familiar with the English character not to know that it will be effected. When we come suddenly in a crowded street upon the careworn features of a familiar face—crossing us like the ghost of pleasant hours long forgotten—let us not recall these features with pain, in sad remembrance of what they once were, but let us in joy recognize it, and go back a pace or two to meet it once again, as that of a friend who has beguiled us of a moment of care, who has taught us to sympathise with virtuous grief, cheating us to tears for sorrows not our own—and we all know how pleasant are such tears. Let such a face be ever remembered as that of our benefactor and our friend.

I tried to recollect, in coming here, whether I had ever been in any theatre in my life from which I had not brought away some pleasant association, however poor the theatre, and I protest, out of my varied experience, I could not remember even one from which I had not brought some favourable impression, and that, commencing with the period when I believed the clown was a being born into the world with infinite pockets, and ending with

that in which I saw the other night, outside one of the "Royal Saloons," a playbill which showed me ships completely rigged, carrying men, and careering over boundless and tempestuous oceans. And now, bespeaking your kindest remembrance of our theatres and actors, I beg to propose that you drink as heartily and freely as ever a toast was drunk in this toast-drinking city, "Prosperity to the General Theatrical Fund."

VIII.

Glasgow, *December* 28, 1847.

[The first Soirée, commemorative of the opening of the Glasgow Athenæum, took place on the above evening in the City Hall. Mr. Charles Dickens presided, and made the following speech:]

Ladies and Gentlemen—Let me begin by endeavouring to convey to you the assurance that not even the warmth of your reception can possibly exceed, in simple earnestness, the cordiality of the feeling with which I come amongst you. This beautiful scene and your generous greeting would naturally awaken, under any circumstances, no common feeling within me; but when I connect them with the high purpose of this brilliant assembly—when I regard it as an educational example and encouragement to the rest of Scotland—when I regard it no less as a recognition on the part of everybody here of the right, indisputable and inalienable, of all those who are actively engaged in the work and business of life to elevate and improve themselves so far as in them lies, by all good means—I feel as if I stand here to swear brotherhood to all the young men in Glasgow—and I may say to all the young women in Glasgow; being unfortunately in no position to take any tenderer vows upon myself—and as if we were pledged from this time henceforth to make common cause together in one of the most laudable and worthy of human objects.

Ladies and gentlemen, a common cause must be made in such a design as that which brings us together this night; for without it, nothing can be done, but with it everything. It is a common cause of right, God knows; for it is idle to suppose that the advantages of such an institution as the Glasgow Athenæum will stop within its own walls or be confined to its own members. Through all

the society of this great and important city, upwards to the highest and downwards to the lowest, it must, I know, be felt for good. Downward in a clearer perception of, and sympathy with, those social miseries which can be alleviated, and those wide-open doors to vice and crime that can be shut and barred; and upward in a greater intelligence, increased efficiency, and higher knowledge, of all who partake of its benefits themselves, or who communicate, as all must do, in a greater or less degree, some portion to the circle of relatives or friends in which they move.

Nor, ladies and gentlemen, would I say of any man, however high his social position, or however great his attainments, that he might not find something to be learnt even from immediate contact with such institutions. If he only saw the goddess Knowledge coming out of her secluded palaces and high places to mingle with the throng, and to give them shining glimpses of the delights which were long kept hoarded up, he might learn something. If he only saw the energy and the courage with which those who earn their daily bread by the labour of their hands or heads, come night after night, as to a recreation, to that which was, perhaps, the whole absorbing business of his youth, there might still be something very wholesome for him to learn. But when he could see in such places their genial and reviving influences, their substituting of the contemplation of the beauties of nature and art, and of the wisdom of great men, for mere sensual enjoyment or stupid idleness—at any rate he would learn this —that it is at once the duty and the interest of all good members of society to encourage and protect them.

I took occasion to say at an athenæum in Yorkshire a few weeks since, and I think it a point most important to be borne in mind on such commemorations as these, that when such societies are objected to, or are decried on the ground that in the views of the objectors, education among the people has not succeeded, the term education is used with not the least reference to its real meaning, and is wholly misunderstood. Mere reading and writing is not education; it would be quite as reasonable to call bricks and mortar architecture—oils and colours art—reeds and cat-gut music—or the child's spelling-books the words of Shakespeare, Milton, or Bacon—as to call the lowest rudiments of education, education, and to

visit on that most abused and slandered word their failure in any instance; and precisely because they were not education; because, generally speaking, the word has been understood in that sense a great deal too long; because education for the business of life, and for the due cultivation of domestic virtues, is at least as important from day to day to the grown person as to the child; because real education, in the strife and contention for a livelihood, and the consequent necessity incumbent on a great number of young persons to go into the world when they are very young, is extremely difficult. It is because of these things that I look upon mechanics' institutions and athenæums as vitally important to the well-being of society. It is because the rudiments of education may there be turned to good account in the acquisition of sound principles, and of the great virtues, hope, faith, and charity, to which all our knowledge tends; it is because of that, I take it, that you have met in education's name to-night.

It is a great satisfaction to me to occupy the place I do in behalf of an infant institution; a remarkably fine child enough, of a vigorous constitution, but an infant still. I esteem myself singularly fortunate in knowing it before its prime, in the hope that I may have the pleasure of remembering in its prime, and when it has attained to its lusty maturity, that I was a friend of its youth. It has already passed through some of the disorders to which children are liable; it succeeded to an elder brother of a very meritorious character, but of rather a weak constitution, and which expired when about twelve months old, from, it is said, a destructive habit of getting up early in the morning: it succeeded this elder brother and has fought manfully through a sea of troubles. Its friends have been often much concerned for it; its pulse has been exceedingly low, being only 1250, when it was expected to have been 10,000; several relations and friends have even gone so far as to walk off once or twice in the melancholy belief that it was dead. Through all that, assisted by the indomitable energy of one or two nurses, to whom it can never be sufficiently grateful, it came triumphantly, and now, of all the youthful members of its family I ever saw, it has the strongest attitude, the healthiest look, the brightest and most cheerful air. I find the institution nobly lodged; I find it with a reading-room, a coffee-

room, and a news-room; I find it with lectures given and in progress, in sound, useful, and well-selected subjects; I find it with morning and evening classes for mathematics, logic, grammar, music, French, German, Spanish, and Italian, attended by upwards of five hundred persons; but, best and first of all, and what is to me more satisfactory than anything else in the history of the institution, I find that all this has been mainly achieved by the young men of Glasgow themselves, with very little assistance. And, ladies and gentlemen, as the axiom, "Heaven helps those who help themselves," is truer in no case than it is in this, I look to the young men of Glasgow, from such a past and such a present, to a noble future. Everything that has been done in any other athenæum, I confidently expect to see done here; and when that shall be the case, and when there shall be great cheap schools in connection with the institution, and when it has bound together for ever all its friends, and brought over to itself all those who look upon it as an objectionable institution—then, and not till then, I hope the young men of Glasgow will rest from their labours, and think their study done.

If the young men of Glasgow want any stimulus or encouragement in this wise, they have one beside them in the presence of their fair townswomen, which is irresistible. It is a most delightful circumstance to me, and one fraught with inestimable benefits to institutions of this kind, that at a meeting of this nature those who in all things are our best examples, encouragers, and friends, are not excluded. The abstract idea of the Graces was in ancient times associated with those arts which refine the human understanding; and it is pleasant to see now, in the rolling of the world, the Graces popularising the practice of those arts by their example, and adorning it with their presence.

I am happy to know that in the Glasgow Athenæum there is a peculiar bond of union between the institution and the fairest part of creation. I understand that the necessary addition to the small library of books being difficult and expensive to make, the ladies have generally resolved to hold a fancy bazaar, and to devote the proceeds to this admirable purpose; I learn with no less pleasure that her Majesty the Queen, in a graceful and womanly sense of the excellence of this design, has con-

sented that the bazaar shall be held under her royal patronage. I can only say, that if you do not find something very noble in your books after this, you are much duller students than I take you to be. The ladies—the single ladies, at least—however disinterested I know they are by sex and nature, will, I hope, resolve to have some of the advantages of these books, by never marrying any but members of the Athenæum. It seems to me it ought to be the pleasantest library in the world.

Hazlitt says, in speaking of some of the graceful fancies of some familiar writer of fiction, "How long since I first became acquainted with these characters; what old-fashioned friends they seem; and yet I am not tired of them like so many other friends, nor they of me." In this case the books will not only possess all the attractions of their own friendships and charms, but also the manifold—I may say womanfold—associations connected with their donors. I can imagine how, in fact, from these fanciful associations, some fair Glasgow widow may be taken for the remoter one whom Sir Roger de Coverley could not forget; I can imagine how Sophia's muff may be seen and loved, but not by Tom Jones, going down the High Street on any winter day; or I can imagine the student finding in every fair form the exact counterpart of the Glasgow Athenæum, and taking into consideration the history of Europe without the consent of Sheriff Alison. I can imagine, in short, how through all the facts and fictions of this library, these ladies will be always active, and that

> Age will not wither them, nor custom stale
> Their infinite variety.

It seems to me to be a moral, delightful, and happy chance, that this meeting has been held at this genial season of the year, when a new time is, as it were, opening before us, and when we celebrate the birth of that divine and blessed Teacher, who took the highest knowledge into the humblest places, and whose great system comprehended all mankind. I hail it as a most auspicious omen, at this time of the year, when many scattered friends and families are re-assembled, for the members of this institution to be calling men together from all quarters, with a brotherly view to the general good, and a view to the general improvement; as I consider that such designs are

practically worthy of the faith we hold, and a practical remembrance of the words, "On earth peace, and good will toward men." I hope that every year which dawns on your Institution will find it richer in its means of usefulness, and greyer-headed in the honour and respect it has gained. It can hardly speak for itself more appropriately than in the words of an English writer, when contemplating the English emblem of this period of the year, the holly-tree:

[Mr. Dickens concluded by quoting the last three stanzas of Southey's poem, "The Holly Tree."]

[In acknowledging a vote of thanks proposed by Sir Archibald (then Mr.) Alison, Mr. Dickens said:]

Ladies and Gentlemen—I am no stranger—and I say it with the deepest gratitude—to the warmth of Scottish hearts; but the warmth of your present welcome almost deprives me of any hope of acknowledging it. I will not detain you any longer at this late hour; let it suffice to assure you, that for taking the part with which I have been honoured in this festival, I have been repaid a thousandfold by your abundant kindness, and by the unspeakable gratification it has afforded me. I hope that, before many years are past, we may have another meeting in public, when we shall rejoice at the immense progress your institution will have made in the meantime, and look back upon this night with new pleasure and satisfaction. I shall now, in conclusion, repeat most heartily and fervently the quotation of Dr. Ewing, the late provost of Glasgow, which Bailie Nicol Jarvie, himself "a Glasgow body," observed was "elegantly putten round the town's arms."

IX.

London, *February* 6, 1850.

[At a public meeting held at Freemasons' Hall under the auspices of the Metropolitan Sanitary Association to consider the question of the Public Health of the Metropolis, the Bishop of London presiding, Mr. Dickens in seconding the third resolution of the meeting regarding the necessity of efficient sanitary precautions against disease made the following speech:]

That the object was to bring the metropolis within the provisions of the Public Health Act, most absurdly

and monstrously excluded from its operation. The object was to diminish an amount of suffering and waste of life which would be a disgrace to a heathen land, to atone for long years of neglect, of which they had all, to a greater or less extent, been guilty, and to redress a most grievous and cruel injustice. It was a common figure of speech, whenever anything important was left out of any great scheme, to say it was the tragedy of "Hamlet" with the part of Hamlet left out; but the existence of a Public Health Act, with the metropolis excluded from its operation, suggested to him something even more sad, and that was a representation of the tragedy of "Hamlet" with nothing in it but the gravedigger. This was a state of things which must not last. Every year more than 13,000 unfortunate persons died unnaturally and prematurely around us. Infancy was made stunted, ugly, and full of pain—maturity made old—and old age imbecile; and pauperism made hopeless every day. They claimed for the metropolis of a Christian country that this should be remedied, and that the capital should set an example of humanity and justice to the whole empire. Of the sanitary condition of London at present, he believed it would be almost impossible to speak too ill. He knew of many places in it unsurpassed in the accumulated horrors of their long neglect by the dirtiest old spots in the dirtiest old towns, under the worst old governments in Europe. Among persons living in such a state of civilised society as that in which they lived, there must be contrasts of rank and intelligence, and greater contrasts in reference to wealth and comfort; but he believed that no greater contrasts between wealth and poverty existed in any part of the world than in this metropolis. The principal objectors to the improvements proposed were divided into two classes. The first consisted of the owners of small tenements, men who pushed themselves to the front of boards of guardians and parish vestries, and were clamorous about the rating of their property; the other class was composed of gentlemen more independent and less selfish, who had a very weak leaning to the words self-government. The first class generally proceeded upon the supposition that the compulsory improvement of their property, when exceedingly defective, would be very expensive. This was a great mistake, for nothing was cheaper than good sani-

tary improvement, as had been shown in the case of "Jacob's Island," which he had described in a work of fiction, and where the improvements could be made at a cost of less than the price of a pint of porter, or two glasses of gin a week, to each inhabitant. With regard to the principle of self-government and that what was done in the next parish was no business of theirs, he should begin to think there was something in it when he found any court or street able to keep its diseases within its own bounds, or any parish able to make out the bounds of its own diseases, keeping exclusively to itself its own fever, small-pox, consumption, and pestilence, just as it maintained its own beadles and its fire-engines. Until that time arrived, and so long as he breathed the same air, lived upon the same soil, and under the same sun, he should consider the health and sickness of that parish as being most decidedly his business, and he would endeavour to force it to be cleanly, and would place it under the control of a general board for the general good. The right reverend chairman had referred to the charge made by thoughtless and inconsiderate people, that the poor liked to be dirty and to lead degraded lives. If this charge were true, it would only present another proof that we are living in a most unnatural state of society: but it is no more true than it was true that when they first had baths they would not bathe, and when they first had washhouses they would not wash. We could not expect to "gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles." We could not be surprised if the poor did not very highly estimate the decencies of life when they had no opportunity of being made acquainted with them. The main wonder in connection with the poor was, that they did so soon esteem that which was really for their good, when they had any fair experience of it. No one who had any knowledge of the poor could fail to be deeply affected by their patience and their sympathy with one another—by the beautiful alacrity with which they helped each other in toil, in the day of suffering, and in the hour of death. It hardly ever happened that any case of extreme protracted destitution found its way into the public prints, without our reading at the same time of some ragged Samaritan sharing his last loaf, or spending his last penny to relieve the poor miserable in the room upstairs, or in the cellar under-

ground. It was to develop in these people the virtue which nothing could eradicate, to raise them in the social scale as they should be raised, to lift them from a condition into which they did not allow their beasts to sink, and to cleanse the foul air for the passage of Christianity and education throughout the land that the meeting was assembled. He could not lay it to his heart, nor could he flatter any of those present with the idea, that they were met to praise themselves, for they could claim little merit for each other in such a cause. The object of their assembling, as he regarded it, was simply to help to set that right which was very wrong before God and before man.

X.

MACREADY

LONDON, *March* 1, 1851.

[On the evening of the above day the friends and admirers of Mr. Macready entertained him at a public dinner. Upwards of six hundred gentlemen assembled to do honour to the great actor on his retirement from the stage. Sir E. B. Lytton took the chair. Among the other speakers were Baron Bunsen, Sir Charles Eastlake, Mr. Thackeray, Mr. John Forster, Mr. W. J. Fox, and Mr. Charles Dickens, who proposed "The Health of the Chairman" in the following words:]

GENTLEMEN—After all you have already heard, and so rapturously received, I assure you that not even the warmth of your kind welcome would embolden me to hope to interest you if I had not full confidence in the subject I have to offer to your notice. But my reliance on the strength of this appeal to you is so strong that I am rather encouraged than daunted by the brightness of the track on which I have to throw my little shadow.

Gentlemen, as it seems to me, there are three great requisites essential to the perfect realisation of a scene so unusual and so splendid as that in which we are now assembled. The first, and I must say very difficult requisite, is a man possessing the strong hold in the general remembrance, the indisputable claim on the general regard and esteem, which is possessed by my dear and much valued friend our guest. The second requisite is the presence of a body of entertainers—a great multitude of hosts so cheerful and good-humoured (under, I am sorry to say, some

W. P. Frith, R. A. R. Graves, A. R. A.

CHARLES DICKENS
At forty-seven.

J N COC
MACON TENN

personal inconvenience)—so warm-hearted and so nobly in earnest, as those whom I have the privilege of addressing. The third, and certainly not the least of these requisites, is a president who, less by his social position, which he may claim by inheritance, or by fortune, which may have been adventitiously won, and may be again accidentally lost, than by his comprehensive genius, shall fitly represent the best part of him to whom honour is done, and the best part of those who unite in the doing of it. Such a president I think we have found in our chairman of to-night, and I need scarcely add that our chairman's health is the toast I have to propose to you.

Many of those who now hear me were present, I daresay, at that memorable scene on Wednesday night last,* when the great vision which had been a delight and a lesson—very often, I dare say, a support and a comfort to you, which had for many years improved and charmed us, and to which we had looked for an elevated relief from the labours of our lives—faded from our sight for ever. I will not stop to inquire whether our guest may or may not have looked backward, through rather too long a period for us, to some remote and distant time when he might possibly bear some far-off likeness to a certain Spanish archbishop whom Gil Blas once served. Nor will I stop to inquire whether it was a reasonable disposition in the audience of Wednesday to seize upon the words—

> And I have bought
> Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
> Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
> Not cast aside so soon—†

but I will venture to intimate to those whom I am addressing how in my mind I mainly connect that occasion with the present. When I looked round on the vast assemblage, and observed the huge pit hushed into stillness on the rising of the curtain, and that mighty surging gallery, where men in their shirt-sleeves had been striking out their arms like strong swimmers—when I saw that boisterous human flood become still water in a moment,

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* February 26, 1851. Mr. Macready's Farewell Benefit at Drury Lane Theatre, on which occasion he played the part of Macbeth.—Ed.

† *Macbeth*, Act 1. Sc. 7.

and remain so from the opening to the end of the play, it suggested to me something besides the trustworthiness of an English crowd, and the delusion under which those labour who are apt to disparage and malign it; it suggested to me that in meeting here to-night we undertook to represent something of the all-pervading feeling of that crowd, through all its intermediate degrees, from the full-dressed lady, with her diamonds sparkling upon her breast in the proscenium box, to the half-undressed gentleman, who bides his time to take some refreshment in the back row of the gallery. And I consider, gentlemen, that no one who could possibly be placed in this chair could so well head that comprehensive representation, and could so well give the crowning grace to our festivities, as one whose comprehensive genius has in his various works embraced them all, and who has, in his dramatic genius, enchanted and enthralled them all at once.

Gentlemen, it is not for me here to recall, after what you have heard this night, what I have seen and known in the bygone times of Mr. Macready's management, of the strong friendship of Sir Bulwer Lytton for him, of the association of his pen with his earliest successes, or of Mr. Macready's zealous and untiring services; but it may be permitted me to say what, in any public mention of him I can never repress, that in the path we both tread I have uniformly found him from the first the most generous of men; quick to encourage, slow to disparage, ever anxious to assert the order of which he is so great an ornament; never condescending to shuffle it off, and leave it outside state rooms, as a Mussulman might leave his slippers outside a mosque.

There is a popular prejudice, a kind of superstition to the effect that authors are not a particularly united body, that they are not invariably and inseparably attached to each other. I am afraid I must concede half a grain or so of truth to that superstition; but this I know, that there can hardly be—that there hardly can have been—among the followers of literature, a man of more high standing farther above these little grudging jealousies, which do sometimes disparage its brightness, than Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

And I have the strongest reason just at present to bear my testimony to his great consideration for those evils

which are sometimes unfortunately attendant upon it, though not on him. For, in conjunction with some other gentlemen now present, I have just embarked in a design with Sir Bulwer Lytton, to smooth the rugged way of young labourers, both in literature and the fine arts, and to soften, but by no eleemosynary means, the declining years of meritorious age. And if that project prosper as I hope it will, and as I know it ought, it will one day be an honour to England where there is now a reproach; originating in his sympathies, being brought into operation by his activity, and endowed from its very cradle by his generosity. There are many among you who will have each his own favourite reason for drinking our chairman's health, resting his claim probably upon some of his diversified successes. According to the nature of your reading, some of you will connect him with prose, others will connect him with poetry. One will connect him with comedy, and another with the romantic passions of the stage, and his assertion of worthy ambition and earnest struggle against

> Those twin gaolers of the human heart,
> Low birth and iron fortune.

Again, another's taste will lead him to the contemplation of Rienzi and the streets of Rome; another's to the rebuilt and repeopled streets of Pompeii; another's to the touching history of the fireside where the Caxton family learned how to discipline their natures and tame their wild hopes down. But, however various their feelings and reasons may be, I am sure that with one accord each will help the other, and all will swell the greeting, with which I shall now propose to you "The Health of our Chairman, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton."

XI.

London, *April* 14, 1851.

[The Sixth Annual Dinner of the General Theatrical Fund was held at the London Tavern on the above date. Mr. Charles Dickens occupied the chair, and in giving the toast of the evening said:]

I have so often had the satisfaction of bearing my testimony, in this place, to the usefulness of the excellent Institution in whose behalf we are assembled, that I should

be really sensible of the disadvantage of having now nothing to say in proposing the toast you all anticipate, if I were not well assured that there is really nothing which needs be said. I have to appeal to you on the old grounds, and no ingenuity of mine could render those grounds of greater weight than they have hitherto successfully proved to you.

Although the General Theatrical Fund Association, unlike many other public societies and endowments, is represented by no building, whether of stone, or brick, or glass, like that astonishing evidence of the skill and energy of my friend Mr. Paxton, which all the world is now called upon to admire, and the great merit of which, as you learn from the best of authorities, is, that it ought to have fallen down long before it was built, and yet that it would by no means consent to doing so—although, I say, this Association possesses no architectural home, it is nevertheless as plain a fact, rests on as solid a foundation, and carries as erect a front, as any building in the world. And the best and the utmost that its exponent and its advocate can do, standing here, is to point it out to those who gather round it, and to say, "Judge for yourselves."

It may not, however, be improper for me to suggest to that portion of the company whose previous acquaintance with it may have been limited, what it is not. It is not a theatrical association whose benefits are confined to a small and exclusive body of actors. It is a society whose claims are always preferred in the name of the whole histrionic art. It is not a theatrical association adapted to a state of theatrical things entirely past and gone, and no more suited to present theatrical requirements than a string of pack-horses would be suited to the conveyance of traffic between London and Birmingham. It is not a rich old gentleman, with the gout in his vitals, brushed and got up once a year to look as vigorous as possible, and brought out for a public airing by the few survivors of a large family of nephews and nieces, who afterwards double-lock the street-door upon the poor relations. It is not a theatrical association which insists that no actor can share its bounty who has not walked so many years on those boards where the English tongue is never heard—between the little bars of music in an aviary of singing birds, to which the un-

wieldy Swan of Avon is never admitted—that bounty which was gathered in the name and for the elevation of an all-embracing art.

No, if there be such things, this thing is not of that kind. This is a theatrical association, expressly adapted to the wants and to the means of the whole theatrical profession all over England. It is a society in which the word exclusiveness is wholly unknown. It is a society which includes every actor, whether he be Benedict or Hamlet, or the Ghost, or the Bandit, or the court-physician, or, in the one person, the whole King's army. He may do the "light business," or the "heavy," or the comic, or the eccentric. He may be the captain who courts the young lady, whose uncle still unaccountably persists in dressing himself in a costume one hundred years older than his time. Or he may be the young lady's brother in the white gloves and the inexpressibles, whose duty in the family appears to be to listen to the female members of it whenever they sing, and to shake hands with everybody between all the verses. Or he may be the baron who gives the fête, and who sits uneasily on the sofa under a canopy with the baroness while the fête is going on. Or he may be the peasant at the fête who comes on the stage to swell the drinking chorus, and who, it may be observed, always turns his glass upside down before he begins to drink out of it. Or he may be the clown who takes away the doorstep of the house where the evening party is going on. Or he may be the gentleman who issues out of the house on the false alarm, and is precipitated into the area. Or, to come to the actresses, she may be the fairy who resides forever in a revolving star with an occasional visit to a bower or a palace. Or, the actor may be the armed head of the witch's cauldron; or even that extraordinary witch, concerning whom I have observed in country places, that he is much less like the notion formed from the description of Hopkins than the Malcolm or Donalbain of the previous scenes. This society, in short, says, "Be you what you may, be you actor or actress, be your path in your profession never so high, or never so low, never so haughty, or never so humble, we offer you the means of doing good to yourselves, and of doing good to your brethren."

This society is essentially a provident institution, ap-

pealing to a class of men to take care of their own interests, and giving a continuous security only in return for a continuous sacrifice and effort. The actor by the means of this society obtains his own right, to no man's wrong; and when, in old age, or in disastrous times, he makes his claim on the institution, he is enabled to say, "I am neither a beggar nor a suppliant. I am but reaping what I sowed long ago." And therefore it is that I cannot hold out to you that in assisting this fund you are doing an act of charity in the common acceptation of that phrase. Of all the abuses of that much abused term, none have more raised my indignation than what I have heard in this room in past times, in reference to this institution. I say, if you help this institution you will be helping the wagoner who has resolutely put his own shoulder to the wheel, and who has *not* stuck idle in the mud. In giving this aid you will be doing an act of justice, and you will be performing an act of gratitude; and this is what I solicit from you; but I will not so far wrong those who are struggling manfully for their own independence as to pretend to entreat from you an act of charity.

I have used the word gratitude; and let any man ask his own heart, and confess if he have not some grateful acknowledgments for the actor's art? Not peculiarly because it is a profession often pursued, and as it were marked, by poverty and misfortune—for other callings, God knows, have their distresses—nor because the actor has sometimes to come from scenes of sickness, of suffering, ay, even of death itself, to play his part before us—for all of us, in our spheres, have as often to do violence to our feelings and to hide our hearts in fighting this great battle of life, and in discharging our duties and responsibilities. But the art of the actor excites reflections, sombre or grotesque, awful or humorous, which we are all familiar with. If any man were to tell me that he denied his acknowledgments to the stage, I would simply put to him one question—whether he remembered his first play?

If you, gentlemen, will but carry back your recollection to that great night, and call to mind the bright and harmless world which then opened to your view, we shall, I think, hear favourably of the effect upon your liberality on this occasion from our Secretary.

This is the sixth year of meetings of this kind—the

sixth time we have had this fine child down after dinner. His nurse, a very worthy person of the name of Buckstone, who has an excellent character from several places, will presently report to you that his chest is perfectly sound, and that his general health is in the most thriving condition. Long may it be so; long may it thrive and grow; long may we meet (it is my sincere wish) to exchange our congratulations on its prosperity; and longer than the line of Banquo may be that line of figures which, as its patriotic share in the national debt, a century hence shall be stated by the Governor and Company of the Bank of England.

XII.

GARDENING.

London, *June* 9, 1851.

[At the Anniversary Dinner of the Gardeners' Benevolent Institution, held under the presidency of Mr., afterwards Sir Joseph, Paxton, Mr. Charles Dickens made the following speech:]

I feel an unbounded and delightful interest in all the purposes and associations of gardening. Probably there is no feeling in the human mind stronger than the love of gardening. The prisoner will make a garden in his prison, and cultivate his solitary flower in the chink of a wall. The poor mechanic will string his scarlet bean from one side of his window to the other, and watch it and tend it with unceasing interest. It is a holy duty in foreign countries to decorate the graves of the dead with flowers, and here, too, the resting-places of those who have passed away from us will soon be gardens. From that old time when the Lord walked in the garden in the cool of the evening, down to the day when a Poet Laureate sang—

> Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
> From yon blue heaven above us bent
> The gardener Adam and his wife
> Smile at the claims of long descent—

at all times and in all ages gardens have been amongst the objects of the greatest interest to mankind. There may be a few, but I believe they are but a few, who take no interest in the products of gardening, except perhaps

in "London Pride," or a certain degenerate kind of "Stock," which is apt to grow hereabouts, cultivated by a species of frozen-out gardeners whom no thaw can ever penetrate: except these, the gardener's art has contributed to the delight of all men in their time. That there ought to be a Benevolent Provident Institution for gardeners is in the fitness of things, and that such an institution ought to flourish and does flourish is still more so.

I have risen to propose to you the health of a gentleman who is a great gardener, and not only a great gardener but a great man—the growth of a fine Saxon root cultivated up with a power of intellect to a plant that is at this time the talk of the civilised world—I allude, of course, to my friend the chairman of the day. I took occasion to say at a public assembly hard-by, a month or two ago, in speaking of that wonderful building Mr. Paxton has designed for the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, that it ought to have fallen down, but that it refused to do so. We were told that the glass ought to have been all broken, the gutters all choked up, and the building flooded, and that the roof and sides ought to have been blown away; in short, that everything ought to have done what everything obstinately persisted in not doing. Earth, air, fire, and water all appear to have conspired together in Mr. Paxton's favour—all have conspired together to one result, which, when the present generation is dust, will be an enduring temple to his honour, and to the energy, the talent, and the resources of Englishmen.

"But," said a gentleman to me the other day, "no doubt Mr. Paxton is a great man, but there is one objection to him that you can never get over, that is, he is a gardener." Now that is our case to-night, that he is a gardener, and we are extremely proud of it. This is a great age, with all its faults, when a man by the power of his own genius and good sense can scale such a daring height as Mr. Paxton has reached, and composedly place his form on the top. This is a great age, when a man impressed with a useful idea can carry out his project without being imprisoned, or thumb-screwed, or persecuted in any form. I can well understand that you, to whom the genius, the intelligence, the industry, and the achievements of our friend are well known, should be anxious to do him honour by placing him in the position he occupies to-night;

and I assure you, you have conferred great gratification on one of his friends, in permitting him to have the opportunity of proposing his health, which that friend now does most cordially and with all the honours.

XIII.

Birmingham, *January* 6, 1853.

[On Thursday, January 6, 1853, at the rooms of the Society of Artists, in Temple Row, Birmingham, a large company assembled to witness the presentation of a testimonial to Mr. Charles Dickens, consisting of a silver-gilt salver and a diamond ring. Mr. Dickens acknowledged the tribute, and the address which accompanied it, in the following words:]

Gentlemen—I feel it very difficult, I assure you, to tender my acknowledgments to you, and through you, to those many friends of mine whom you represent, for this honour and distinction which you have conferred upon me. I can most honestly assure you, that it is in the power of no great representative of numbers of people to awaken such happiness in me as is inspired by this token of goodwill and remembrance, coming to me direct and fresh from the numbers themselves. I am truly sensible, gentlemen, that my friends who have united in this address are partial in their kindness, and regard what I have done with too great favour. But I may say, with reference to one class—some members of which, I presume, are included there—that I should in my own eyes be very unworthy both of the generous gift and the generous feeling which has been evinced, and this occasion, instead of pleasure, would give me nothing but pain, if I was unable to assure them, and those who are in front of this assembly, that what the working people have found me towards them in my books, I am throughout my life. Gentlemen, whenever I have tried to hold up to admiration their fortitude, patience, gentleness, the reasonableness of their nature, so accessible to persuasion, and their extraordinary goodness one towards another, I have done so because I have first genuinely felt that admiration myself, and have been thoroughly imbued with the sentiment which I sought to communicate to others.

Gentlemen, I accept this salver and this ring as far above all price to me, as very valuable in themselves, and

as beautiful specimens of the workmanship of this town, with great emotion, I assure you, and with the liveliest gratitude. You remember something, I dare say, of the old romantic stories of those charmed rings which would lose their brilliance when their wearer was in danger, or would press his finger reproachfully when he was going to do wrong. In the very improbable event of my being in the least danger of deserting the principles which have won me these tokens, I am sure the diamond in that ring would assume a clouded aspect to my faithless eye, and would, I know, squeeze a throb of pain out of my treacherous heart. But I have not the least misgiving on that point; and, in this confident expectation, I shall remove my own old diamond ring from my left hand, and in future wear the Birmingham ring on my right, where its grasp will keep me in mind of the good friends I have here, and in vivid remembrance of this happy hour.

Gentlemen, in conclusion, allow me to thank you and the Society to whom these rooms belong, that the presentation has taken place in an atmosphere so congenial to me, and in an apartment decorated with so many beautiful works of art, among which I recognise before me the productions of friends of mine, whose labours and triumphs will never be subjects of indifference to me. I thank those gentlemen for giving me the opportunity of meeting them here on an occasion which has some connection with their own proceedings; and, though last not least, I tender my acknowledgments to that charming presence, without which nothing beautiful can be complete, and which is endearingly associated with rings of a plainer description, and which, I must confess, awakens in my mind at the present moment a feeling of regret that I am not in a condition to make an offer of these testimonials. I beg you, gentlemen, to commend me very earnestly and gratefully to our absent friends, and to assure them of my affectionate and heartfelt respect.

[The company then adjourned to Dee's Hotel, where a banquet took place, at which about two hundred and twenty persons were present, among whom were some of the most distinguished of the Royal Academicians. To the toast of "The Literature of England" Mr. Dickens responded as follows:]

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen—I am happy, on behalf of many labourers in that great field of literature to which

you have pledged the toast, to thank you for the tribute you have paid to it. Such an honour, rendered by acclamation in such a place as this, seems to me, if I may follow on the same side as the venerable Archdeacon (Sandford) who lately addressed you, and who has inspired me with a gratification I can never forget—such an honour, gentlemen, rendered here, seems to me a two-sided illustration of the position that literature holds in these latter, and, of course, "degenerate" days. To the great compact phalanx of the people, by whose industry, perseverance, and intelligence, and their result in money-wealth, such places as Birmingham, and many others like it, have arisen —to that great centre of support, that comprehensive experience, and that beating heart, literature has turned happily from individual patrons—sometimes munificent, often sordid, always few—and has there found at once its highest purpose, its natural range of action, and its best reward. Therefore it is right also, as it seems to me, not only that literature should receive honour here, but that it should render honour, too, remembering that if it has undoubtedly done good to Birmingham, Birmingham has undoubtedly done good to it. From the shame of the purchased dedication, from the scurrilous and dirty work of Grub Street, from the dependent seat on sufferance at my Lord Duke's table to-day, and from the sponging-house or Marshalsea to-morrow—from that venality which, by a fine moral retribution, has degraded statesmen even to a greater extent than authors, because the statesmen entertained a low belief in the universality of corruption, while the author yielded only to the dire necessity of his calling—from all such evils the people have set literature free. And my creed in the exercise of that profession is, that literature cannot be too faithful to the people in return—cannot too ardently advocate the cause of their advancement, happiness, and prosperity. I have heard it sometimes said—and what is worse, as expressing something more cold-blooded, I have sometimes seen it written—that literature has suffered by this change, that it has degenerated by being made cheaper. I have not found that to be the case: nor do I believe that you have made the discovery either. But let a good book in these "bad" times be made accessible—even upon an abtruse and difficult subject, so that it be one of legitimate interest

to mankind—and my life on it, it shall be extensively bought, read, and well considered.

Why do I say this? Because I believe there are in Birmingham at this moment many working men infinitely better versed in Shakespeare and in Milton than the average of fine gentlemen in the days of bought-and-sold dedications and dear books. I ask any one to consider for himself who, at this time, gives the greatest relative encouragement to the dissemination of such useful publications as Macaulay's "History," Layard's "Researches," Tennyson's "Poems," "The Duke of Wellington's published Despatches," or the minutest truths (if any truth can be called minute) discovered by the genius of a Herschel or a Faraday? It is with all these things as with the great music of Mendelssohn, or a lecture upon art—if we had the good fortune to listen to one to-morrow—by my distinguished friend the President of the Royal Academy. However small the audience, however contracted the circle in the water, in the first instance, the people are nearer the wider range outside, and the Sister arts, while they instruct them, derive a wholesome advantage and improvement from their ready sympathy and cordial response. I may instance the case of my friend Mr. Ward's magnificent picture;* and the reception of that picture here is an example that it is not now the province of art in painting to hold itself in monastic seclusion, that it cannot hope to rest on a single foundation for its great temple—on the mere classic pose of a figure, or the folds of a drapery—but that it must be imbued with human passions and action, informed with human right and wrong, and being so informed it may fearlessly put itself upon its trial, like the criminal of old, to be judged by God and its country.

Gentlemen, to return and conclude, as I shall have occasion to trouble you again. For this time I have only once again to repeat what I have already said. As I begun with literature I shall end with it. I would simply say that I believe no true man, with anything to tell, need have the least misgiving, either for himself or his message, before a large number of hearers—always supposing that he be not afflicted with the coxcombical idea of writing

* "Charlotte Corday going to Execution."

down to the popular intelligence, instead of writing the popular intelligence up to himself, if, perchance, he be above it;—and, provided always that he deliver himself plainly of what is in him, which seems to be no unreasonable stipulation, it being supposed that he has some dim design of making himself understood. On behalf of that literature to which you have done so much honour, I beg to thank you most cordially, and on my own behalf, for the most flattering reception you have given to one whose claim is, that he has the distinction of making it his profession.

[Later in the evening, Mr. Dickens gave as a toast, "The Educational Institutions of Birmingham," in the following speech:]

I am requested to propose—or, according to the hypothesis of my friend, Mr. Owen, I am in the temporary character of a walking advertisement to advertise to you —the Educational Institutions of Birmingham; an advertisement to which I have the greatest pleasure in calling your attention. Gentlemen, it is right that I should, in so many words, mention the more prominent of these institutions, not because your local memories require any prompting, but because the enumeration implies what has been done here, what you are doing, and what you will yet do. I believe the first is the King Edward's Grammar School, with its various branches, and prominent among them is that most admirable means of training the wives of working men to be good wives and working wives, the prime ornament of their homes, and the cause of happiness to others—I mean those excellent girls' schools in various parts of the town, which, under the excellent superintendence of the principal, I should most sincerely desire to see in every town in England. Next, I believe, is the Spring Hill College, a learned institution belonging to the body of Independents, foremost among whose professors literature is proud to hail Mr. Henry Rogers as one of the soundest and ablest contributors to the "Edinburgh Review." The next is the Queen's College, which, I may say, is only a newly-born child; but, in the hands of such an admirable Doctor, we may hope to see it arrive at a vigorous maturity. The next is the School of Design, which, as has been well observed by my friend Sir Charles Eastlake, is invaluable in such a place as this; and, lastly,

there is the Polytechnic Institution, with regard to which I had long ago occasion to express my profound conviction that it was of unspeakable importance to such a community as this, when I had the honour to be present, under the auspices of your excellent representative, Mr. Scholefield. This is the last of what has been done in an educational way. They are all admirable in their kind; but I am glad to find that more is yet doing. A few days ago I received a Birmingham newspaper, containing a most interesting account of a preliminary meeting for the formation of a Reformatory School for juvenile delinquents. You are not exempt here from the honour of saving these poor, neglected, and wretched outcasts. I read of one infant, six years old, who has been twice as many times in the hands of the police as years have passed over his devoted head. These are the eggs from which jail-birds are hatched; if you wish to check that dreadful brood, you must take the young and innocent, and have them reared by Christian hands.

Lastly, I am rejoiced to find that there is on foot a scheme for a new Literary and Scientific Institution, which would be worthy even of this place, if there was nothing of the kind in it—an institution, as I understand it, where the words "exclusion" and "exclusiveness" shall be quite unknown—where all classes may assemble in common trust, respect, and confidence—where there shall be a great gallery of painting and statuary open to the inspection and admiration of all comers—where there shall be a museum of models in which industry may observe its various sources of manufacture, and the mechanic may work out new combinations, and arrive at new results —where the very mines under the earth and under the sea shall not be forgotten, but presented in little to the inquiring eye—an institution, in short, where many and many of the obstacles which now inevitably stand in the rugged way of the poor inventor shall be smoothed away, and where, if he have anything in him, he will find encouragement and hope.

I observe with unusual interest and gratification that a body of gentlemen are going for a time to lay aside their individual prepossessions on other subjects, and, as good citizens, are to be engaged in a design as patriotic as well can be. They have the intention of meeting in a few

days to advance this great object, and I call upon you, in drinking this toast, to drink success to their endeavour, and to make it the pledge by all good means to promote it.

If I strictly followed out the list of educational institutions in Birmingham, I should not have done here, but I intend to stop, merely observing that I have seen within a short walk of this place one of the most interesting and practical Institutions for the Deaf and Dumb that has ever come under my observation. I have seen in the factories and workshops of Birmingham such beautiful order and regularity, and such great consideration for the workpeople provided, that they might justly be entitled to be considered educational too. I have seen in your splendid Town Hall, when the cheap concerts are going on there, also an admirable educational institution. I have seen their results in the demeanour of your working people, excellently balanced by a nice instinct, as free from servility on the one hand, as from self-conceit on the other. It is a perfect delight to have need to ask a question, if only from the manner of the reply—a manner I never knew to pass unnoticed by an observant stranger. Gather up those threads, and a great many more I have not touched upon, and weaving all into one good fabric, remember how much is included under the general head of the Educational Institutions of your town.

XIV.

Birmingham, *December* 30, 1853.

[The first of the readings generously given by Mr. Charles Dickens on behalf of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, took place on Tuesday evening, December 27, 1853, at the Birmingham Town Hall, where, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, nearly two thousand persons had assembled. The work selected was the "Christmas Carol." The high mimetic powers possessed by Mr. Dickens enabled him to personate with remarkable force the various characters of the story, and with admirable skill to pass rapidly from the hard, unbelieving Scrooge to the trusting and thankful Bob Cratchit, and from the genial fulness of Scrooge's nephew to the hideous mirth of the party assembled in Old Joe the Ragshop-keeper's parlour. The reading occupied more than three hours, but so interested were the audience, that only one or two left the Hall previously to its termination, and the loud and frequent bursts of applause attested the successful discharge of

the reader's arduous task. On Thursday evening Mr. Dickens read "The Cricket on the Hearth." The Hall was again well filled, and the tale, though deficient in the dramatic interest of the "Carol," was listened to with attention, and rewarded with repeated applause. On Friday evening, the "Christmas Carol" was read a second time to a large assemblage of work-people, for whom, at Mr. Dickens's special request, the major part of the vast edifice was reserved. Before commencing the tale, Mr. Dickens delivered the following brief address, almost every sentence of which was received with loudly expressed applause:]

My good Friends—When I first imparted to the committee of the projected Institute my particular wish that on one of the evenings of my readings here the main body of my audience should be composed of working men and their families, I was animated by two desires; first, by the wish to have the great pleasure of meeting you face to face at this Christmas time, and accompany you myself through one of my little Christmas books; and second, by the wish to have an opportunity of stating publicly in your presence, and in the presence of the committee, my earnest hope that the Institute will, from the beginning, recognise one great principle—strong in reason and justice—which I believe to be essential to the very life of such an Institution. It is, that the working man shall, from the first unto the last, have a share in the management of an Institution which is designed for his benefit, and which calls itself by his name.

I have no fear here of being misunderstood—of being supposed to mean too much in this. If there ever was a time when any one class could of itself do much for its own good, and for the welfare of society—which I greatly doubt—that time is unquestionably past. It is in the fusion of different classes, without confusion; in the bringing together of employers and employed; in the creating of a better common understanding among those whose interests are identical, who depend upon each other, who are vitally essential to each other, and who never can be in unnatural antagonism without deplorable results, that one of the chief principles of a Mechanics' Institution should consist. In this world a great deal of the bitterness among us arises from an imperfect understanding of one another. Erect in Birmingham a great Educational Institution, properly educational; educational of the feelings as well as of the reason; to which all orders of Birming-

ham men contribute; in which all orders of Birmingham men meet; wherein all orders of Birmingham men are faithfully represented—and you will erect a Temple of Concord here which will be a model edifice to the whole of England.

Contemplating as I do the existence of the Artisans' Committee which not long ago considered the establishment of the Institute so sensibly, and supported it so heartily, I earnestly entreat the gentlemen—earnest I know in the good work, and who are now among us—by all means to avoid the great shortcoming of similar institutions; and in asking the working man for his confidence, to set him the great example and give him theirs in return. You will judge for yourselves if I promise too much for the working man, when I say that he will stand by such an enterprise with the utmost of his patience, his perseverance, sense, and support; that I am sure he will need no charitable aid or condescending patronage; but will readily and cheerfully pay for the advantages which it confers; that he will prepare himself in individual cases where he feels that the adverse circumstances around him have rendered it necessary; in a word, that he will feel his responsibility like an honest man, and will most honestly and manfully discharge it. I now proceed to the pleasant task to which I assure you I have looked forward for a long time.

[At the close of the reading Mr. Dickens received a vote of thanks, and "three cheers, with three times three." As soon as the enthusiasm of the audience would allow him to speak, Mr. Dickens said:]

You have heard so much of my voice since we met to-night, that I will only say, in acknowledgment of this affecting mark of your regard, that I am truly and sincerely interested in you; that any little service I have rendered to you I have freely rendered from my heart; that I hope to become an honourary member of your great Institution, and will meet you often there when it becomes practically useful; that I thank you most affectionately for this new mark of your sympathy and approval; and that I wish you many happy returns of this great birthday-time, and many prosperous years.

XV.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

London, *December* 30, 1854.

[The following speech was made by Mr. Dickens at the Anniversary Dinner in commemoration of the foundation of the Commercial Travellers' Schools, held at the London Tavern on the above date. Mr. Dickens presided on this occasion, and proposed the toasts.]

I think it may be assumed that most of us here present know something about travelling. I do not mean in distant regions or foreign countries, although I dare say some of us have had experience in that way, but at home, and within the limits of the United Kingdom. I dare say most of us have had experience of the extinct "fast coaches," the "Wonders," "Taglionis," and "Tallyhos," of other days. I dare say most of us remember certain modest post-chaises, dragging us down interminable roads, through slush and mud, to little country towns with no visible population, except half a dozen men in smock-frocks, half a dozen women with umbrellas and pattens, and a washed-out dog or so shivering under the gables, to complete the desolate picture. We can all discourse, I dare say, if so minded, about our recollections of the "Talbot," the "Queen's Head," or the "Lion" of those days. We have all been to that room on the ground floor on one side of the old inn yard, not quite free from a certain fragrant smell of tobacco, where the cruets on the sideboard were usually absorbed by the skirts of the box-coats that hung from the wall; where awkward servants waylaid us at every turn, like so many human man-traps; where county members, framed and glazed, were eternally presenting that petition which, somehow or other, had made their glory in the county, although nothing else had ever come of it. Where the books in the windows always wanted the first, last, and middle leaves, and where the one man was always arriving at some unusual hour in the night, and requiring his breakfast at a similarly singular period of the day. I have no doubt we could all be very eloquent on the comforts of our favourite hotel, wherever it was—its beds, its stables, its vast amount of posting, its excellent cheese, its head waiter, its capital dishes, its pigeon-pies,

or its 1820 port. Or possibly we could recall our chaste and innocent admiration of its landlady, or our fraternal regard for its handsome chambermaid. A celebrated domestic critic once writing of a famous actress, renowned for her virtue and beauty, gave her the character of being an "eminently gatherable-to-one's-arms sort of person." Perhaps some one amongst us has borne a somewhat similar tribute to the mental charms of the fair deities who presided at our hotels.

With the travelling characteristics of later times, we are all, no doubt, equally familiar. We know all about that station to which we must take our ticket, although we never get there; and the other one at which we arrive after dark, certain to find it half a mile from the town, where the old road is sure to have been abolished, and the new road is going to be made—where the old neighbourhood has been tumbled down, and the new one is not half built up. We know all about that party on the platform who, with the best intentions, can do nothing for our luggage except pitch it into all sorts of unattainable places. We know all about that short omnibus, in which one is to be doubled up, to the imminent danger of the crown of one's hat; and about that fly, whose leading peculiarity is never to be there when it is wanted. We know, too, how instantaneously the lights of the station disappear when the train starts, and about that grope to the new Railway Hotel, which will be an excellent house when the customers come, but which at present has nothing to offer but a liberal allowance of damp mortar and new lime.

I record these little incidents of home travel mainly with the object of increasing your interest in the purpose of this night's assemblage. Every traveller has a home of his own, and he learns to appreciate it the more from his wandering. If he has no home, he learns the same lesson unselfishly by turning to the homes of other men. He may have his experiences of cheerful and exciting pleasures abroad; but home is the best, after all, and its pleasures are the most heartily and enduringly prized. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, every one must be prepared to learn that commercial travellers, as a body, know how to prize those domestic relations from which their pursuits so frequently sever them; for no one could pos-

sibly invent a more delightful or more convincing testimony to the fact than they themselves have offered in founding and maintaining a school for the children of deceased or unfortunate members of their own body; those children who now appeal to you in mute but eloquent terms from the gallery.

It is to support that school, founded with such high and friendly objects, so very honourable to your calling, and so useful in its solid and practical results, that we are here to-night. It is to roof that building which is to shelter the children of your deceased friends with one crowning ornament, the best that any building can have, namely, a receipt stamp for the full amount of the cost. It is for this that your active sympathy is appealed to, for the completion of your own good work. You know how to put your hands to the plough in earnest as well as any men in existence, for this little book informs me that you raised last year no less a sum than £8,000, and while fully half of that sum consisted of new donations to the building fund, I find that the regular revenue of the charity has only suffered to the extent of £30. After this, I most earnestly and sincerely say that were we all authors together, I might boast, if in my profession were exhibited the same unity and steadfastness I find in yours.

I will not urge on you the casualties of a life of travel, or the vicissitudes of business, or the claims fostered by that bond of brotherhood which ought always to exist amongst men who are united in a common pursuit. You have already recognized those claims so nobly, that I will not presume to lay them before you in any further detail. Suffice it to say that I do not think it is in your nature to do things by halves. I do not think you could do so if you tried, and I have a moral certainty that you never will try. To those gentlemen present who are not members of the travellers' body, I will say in the words of the French proverb, "Heaven helps those who help themselves." The Commercial Travellers having helped themselves so gallantly, it is clear that the visitors who come as a sort of celestial representatives ought to bring that aid in their pockets which the precept teaches us to expect from them. With these few remarks, I beg to give you as a toast, "Success to the Commercial Travellers' School."

[In proposing the health of the Army in the Crimea, Mr. Dickens said:]

It does not require any extraordinary sagacity in a commercial assembly to appreciate the dire evils of war. The great interests of trade enfeebled by it, the enterprise of better times paralysed by it, all the peaceful arts bent down before it, too palpably indicate its character and results, so that far less practical intelligence than that by which I am surrounded would be sufficient to appreciate the horrors of war. But there are seasons when the evils of peace, though not acutely felt, are immeasurably greater, and when a powerful nation, by admitting the right of any autocrat to do wrong, sows by such complicity the seeds of its own ruin, and overshadows itself in time to come with that fatal influence which great and ambitious powers are sure to exercise over their weaker neighbours.

Therefore it is, ladies and gentlemen, that the tree has not its root in English ground from which the yard wand can be made that will measure—the mine has not its place in English soil that will supply the material of a pair of scales to weigh the influence that may be at stake in the war in which we are now straining all our energies. That war is, at any time and in any shape, a most dreadful and deplorable calamity, we need no proverb to tell us; but it is just because it is such a calamity, and because that calamity must not for ever be impending over us at the fancy of one man against all mankind, that we must not allow that man to darken from our view the figures of peace and justice between whom and us he now interposes.

Ladies and gentlemen, if ever there were a time when the true spirits of two countries were really fighting in the cause of human advancement and freedom—no matter what diplomatic notes or other nameless botherations, from number one to one hundred thousand and one, may have preceded their taking the field—if ever there were a time when noble hearts were deserving well of mankind by exposing themselves to the obedient bayonets of a rash and barbarian tyrant, it is now, when the faithful children of England and France are fighting so bravely in the Crimea. Those faithful children are the admiration and wonder of the world, so gallantly are they discharging

their duty; and therefore I propose to an assembly, emphatically representing the interests and arts of peace, to drink the health of the Allied Armies of England and France, with all possible honours.

[In proposing the health of the Treasurer, Mr. Dickens said:]

If the President of this Institution had been here, I should possibly have made one of the best speeches you ever heard; but as he is not here, I shall turn to the next toast on my list: "The health of your worthy Treasurer, Mr. George Moore," a name which is a synonym for integrity, enterprise, public spirit, and benevolence. He is one of the most zealous officers I ever saw in my life; he appears to me to have been doing nothing during the last week but rushing into and out of railway-carriages, and making eloquent speeches at all sorts of public dinners in favour of this charity. Last evening he was at Manchester, and this evening he comes here, sacrificing his time and convenience, and exhausting in the meantime the contents of two vast leaden inkstands and no end of pens, with the energy of fifty bankers' clerks rolled into one. But I clearly foresee that the Treasurer will have so much to do to-night, such gratifying sums to acknowledge and such large lines of figures to write in his books, that I feel the greatest consideration I can show him is to propose his health without further observation, leaving him to address you in his own behalf. I propose to you, therefore, the health of Mr. George Moore, the Treasurer of this charity, and I need hardly add that it is one which is to be drunk with all the honours.

[Later in the evening, Mr. Dickens rose and said:]

So many travellers have been going up Mont Blanc lately, both in fact and in fiction, that I have heard recently of a proposal for the establishment of a Company to employ Sir Joseph Paxton to take it down. Only one of those travellers, however, has been enabled to bring Mont Blanc to Piccadilly, and, by his own ability and good humour, so to thaw its eternal ice and snow as that the most timid lady may ascend it twice a day, "during the holidays," without the smallest danger or fatigue. Mr. Albert Smith, who is present amongst us to-night, is undoubtedly "a traveller." I do not know whether he

takes many orders, but this I can testify, on behalf of the children of his friends, that he gives them in the most liberal manner.

We have also amongst us my friend, Mr. Peter Cunningham, who is also a traveller, not only in right of his able edition of Goldsmith's "Traveller," but in right of his admirable Handbook, which proves him to be a traveller in the right spirit through all the labyrinths of London. We have also amongst us my friend Horace Mayhew, very well known also for his books, but especially for his genuine admiration of the company at that end of the room [*Mr. Dickens here pointed to the ladies' gallery*], and who, whenever the fair sex is mentioned, will be found to have the liveliest personal interest in the conversation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am about to propose to you the health of these three distinguished visitors. They are all admirable speakers, but Mr. Albert Smith has confessed to me, that on fairly balancing his own merits as a speaker and a singer, he rather thinks he excels in the latter art. I have, therefore, yielded to his estimate of himself, and I have now the pleasure of informing you that he will lead off the speeches of the other two gentlemen with a song. Mr. Albert Smith has just said to me in an earnest tone of voice, "What song would you recommend?" and I replied, Galignani's "Messenger." Ladies and gentlemen, I therefore beg to propose the health of Messrs. Albert Smith, Peter Cunningham, and Horace Mayhew, and call on the first-named gentleman for a song.

XVI.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM.

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, *Wednesday, June* 27, 1855.

I cannot, I am sure, better express my sense of the kind reception accorded to me by this great assembly than by promising to compress what I shall address to it within the closest possible limits. It is more than eighteen hundred years ago, since there was a set of men who "thought they should be heard for their much speaking." As they have propagated exceedingly since that

time, and as I observe that they flourish just now to a surprising extent about Westminster, I will do my best to avoid adding to the numbers of that prolific race. The noble lord at the head of the Government, when he wondered in Parliament about a week ago, that my friend, Mr. Layard, did not blush for having stated in this place what the whole country knows perfectly well to be true, and what no man in it can by possibility better know to be true than those disinterested supporters of that noble lord, who had the advantage of hearing him and cheering him night after night, when he first became premier—I mean that he did officially and habitually joke, at a time when this country was plunged in deep disgrace and distress—I say, that noble lord, when he wondered so much that the man of this age, who has, by his earnest and adventurous spirit, done the most to distinguish himself and it, did not blush for the tremendous audacity of having so come between the wind and his nobility, turned an airy period with reference to the private theatricals at Drury Lane Theatre. Now, I have some slight acquaintance with theatricals, private and public, and I will accept that figure of the noble lord. I will not say that if I wanted to form a company of her Majesty's servants, I think I should know where to put my hand on "the comic old gentleman"; nor, that if I wanted to get up a pantomime, I fancy I should know what establishment to go to for the tricks and changes; also, for a very considerable host of supernumeraries, to trip one another up in that contention with which many of us are familiar, both on these and on other boards, in which the principal objects thrown about are loaves and fishes. But I will try to give the noble lord the reason for these private theatricals, and the reason why, however ardently he may desire to ring the curtain down upon them, there is not the faintest present hope of their coming to a conclusion. It is this: The public theatricals which the noble lord is so condescending as to manage are so intolerably bad, the machinery is so cumbrous, the parts so ill-distributed, the company so full of "walking gentlemen," the managers have such large families, and are so bent upon putting those families into what is theatrically called "first business"—not because of their aptitude for it, but because they *are*

their families, that we find ourselves obliged to organise an opposition. We have seen the "Comedy of Errors" played so dismally like a tragedy that we really cannot bear it. We are therefore making bold to get up the "School of Reform," and we hope, before the play is out, to improve that noble lord by our performance very considerably. If he object that we have no right to improve him without his license, we venture to claim that right in virtue of his orchestra, consisting of a very powerful piper, whom we always pay.

Sir, as this is the first political meeting I have ever attended, and as my trade and calling is not associated with politics, perhaps it may be useful for me to show how I came to be here, because reasons similar to those which have influenced me may still be trembling in the balance in the minds of others. I want at all times, in full sincerity, to do my duty by my countrymen. If I feel an attachment towards them, there is nothing disinterested or meritorious in that, for I can never too affectionately remember the confidence and friendship that they have long reposed in me. My sphere of action—which I shall never change—I shall never overstep, further than this, or for a longer period than I do to-night. By literature I have lived, and through literature I have been content to serve my country; and I am perfectly well aware that I cannot serve two masters. In my sphere of action I have tried to understand the heavier social grievances, and to help to set them right. When the "Times" newspaper proved its then almost incredible case, in reference to the ghastly absurdity of that vast labyrinth of misplaced men and misdirected things, which had made England unable to find on the face of the earth, an enemy one-twentieth part so potent to effect the misery and ruin of her noble defenders as she has been herself, I believe that the gloomy silence into which the country fell was by far the darkest aspect in which a great people had been exhibited for many years. With shame and indignation lowering among all classes of society, and this new element of discord piled on the heaving basis of ignorance, poverty, and crime, which is always below us —with little adequate expression of the general mind, or apparent understanding of the general mind, in Parliament—with the machinery of Government and the

legislature going round and round, and the people fallen from it and standing aloof, as if they left it to its last remaining function of destroying itself, when it had achieved the destruction of so much that was dear to them—I did and do believe that the only wholesome turn affairs so menacing could possibly take, was, the awaking of the people, the outspeaking of the people, the uniting of the people in all patriotism and loyalty to effect a great peaceful constitutional change in the administration of their own affairs. At such a crisis this association arose; at such a crisis I joined it: considering its further case to be—if further case could possibly be needed—that what is everybody's business is nobody's business, that men must be gregarious in good citizenship as well as in other things, and that it is a law in nature that there must be a centre of attraction for particles to fly to, before any serviceable body with recognised functions can come into existence. This association has arisen, and we belong to it. What are the objections to it? I have heard in the main but three, which I will now briefly notice. It is said that it is proposed by this association to exercise an influence, through the constituencies, on the House of Commons. I have not the least hesitation in saying that I have the smallest amount of faith in the House of Commons at present existing, and that I consider the exercise of such influence highly necessary to the welfare and honour of this country. I was reading no later than yesterday the book of Mr. Pepys, which is rather a favourite of mine, in which he, two hundred years ago, writing of the House of Commons, says:

"My cousin Roger Pepys tells me that it is matter of the greatest grief to him in the world that he should be put upon this trust of being a Parliament man; because he says nothing is done, that he can see, out of any truth and sincerity, but mere envy and design."

Now, how it comes to pass that after two hundred years, and many years after a Reform Bill, the House of Commons is so little changed, I will not stop to inquire. I will not ask how it happens that bills which cramp and worry the people, and restrict their scant enjoyments, are so easily passed, and how it happens that measures for their real interests are so very difficult to be got through Parliament. I will not analyse the confined air of the

lobby, or reduce to their primitive gases its deadening influences on the memory of that Honourable Member who was once a candidate for the honour of your—and my—independent vote and interest. I will not ask what is that Secretarian figure, full of blandishments, standing on the threshold, with its finger on its lips. I will not ask how it comes that those personal altercations, involving all the removes and definitions of Shakespeare's Touchstone—the retort courteous—the quip modest—the reply churlish—the reproof valiant—the counter-check quarrelsome—the lie circumstantial and the lie direct—are of immeasurably greater interest in the House of Commons than the health, the taxation, and the education of a whole people. I will not penetrate into the mysteries of that secret chamber in which the Bluebeard of Party keeps his strangled public questions, and with regard to which, when he gives the key to his wife, the new comer, he strictly charges her on no account to open the door. I will merely put it to the experience of everybody here, whether the House of Commons is not occasionally a little hard of hearing, a little dim of sight, a little slow of understanding, and whether, in short, it is not in a sufficiently invalided state to require close watching, and the occasional application of sharp stimulants; and whether it is not capable of considerable improvement? I believe that, in order to preserve it in a state of real usefulness and independence, the people must be very watchful and very jealous of it; and it must have its memory jogged; and be kept awake when it happens to have taken too much Ministerial narcotic; it must be trotted about, and must be hustled and pinched in a friendly way, as is the usage in such cases. I hold that no power can deprive us of the right to administer our functions as a body comprising electors from all parts of the country, associated together because their country is dearer to them than drowsy twaddle, unmeaning routine, or worn-out conventionalities.

This brings me to objection number two. It is stated that this Association sets class against class. Is this so? [*Cries of "No."*] No, it finds class set against class, and seeks to reconcile them. I wish to avoid placing in opposition those two words—Aristocracy and People. I am one who can believe in the virtues and uses of both,

and would not on any account deprive either of a single just right belonging to it. I will use, instead of these words, the terms, the governors and the governed. These two bodies the Association finds with a gulf between them, in which are lying, newly-buried, thousands on thousands of the bravest and most devoted men that even England ever bred. It is to prevent the recurrence of innumerable smaller evils, of which, unchecked, that great calamity was the crowning height and the necessary consummation, and to bring together those two fronts looking now so strangely at each other, that this Association seeks to help to bridge over that abyss, with a structure founded on common justice and supported by common sense. Setting class against class! That is the very parrot prattle that we have so long heard. Try its justice by the following example: A respectable gentleman had a large establishment, and a great number of servants who were good for nothing, who, when he asked them to give his children bread, gave them stones; who, when they were told to give those children fish, gave them serpents. When they were ordered to send to the East, they sent to the West; when they ought to have been serving dinner in the North, they were consulting exploded cookery books in the South; who wasted, destroyed, tumbled over one another when required to do anything, and were bringing everything to ruin. At last the respectable gentleman calls his house steward, and says, even then more in sorrow than in anger: "This is a terrible business; no fortune can stand it—no mortal equanimity can bear it! I must change my system; I must obtain servants who will do their duty." The house steward throws up his eyes in pious horror, ejaculates "Good God, master, you are setting class against class!" and then rushes off into the servants' hall, and delivers a long and melting oration on that wicked feeling.

I now come to the third objection, which is common among young gentlemen who are not particularly fit for anything but spending money which they have not got. It is usually comprised in the observation: "How very extraordinary it is that these Administrative Reform fellows can't mind their own business." I think it will occur to all that a very sufficient mode of disposing of this objection is to say, that it is our own business we

mind when we come forward in this way, and it is to prevent it from being mismanaged by them. I observe from the Parliamentary debates—which have of late, by the bye, frequently suggested to me that there is this difference between the bull of Spain and the bull of Nineveh, that, whereas, in the Spanish case, the bull rushes at the scarlet, in the Ninevite case, the scarlet rushes at the bull—I have observed from the Parliamentary debates that, by a curious fatality, there has been a great deal of the reproof valiant and the counter-check quarrelsome, in reference to every case, showing the necessity of Administrative Reform, by whomsoever produced, whensoever, and wheresoever. I dare say I should have no difficulty in adding two or three cases to the list, which I know to be true, and which I have no doubt would be contradicted, but I consider it a work of supererogation; for, if the people at large be not already convinced that a sufficient general case has been made out for Administrative Reform, I think they can never be, and they never will be. There is, however, an old indisputable, very well known story, which has so pointed a moral at the end of it that I will substitute it for a new case: by doing of which I may avoid, I hope, the sacred wrath of St. Stephen's. Ages ago a savage mode of keeping accounts on notched sticks was introduced into the Court of Exchequer, and the accounts were kept, much as Robinson Crusoe kept his calendar on the desert island. In the course of considerable revolutions of time, the celebrated Cocker was born, and died; Walkinghame, of the "Tutor's Assistant," and well versed in figures, was also born, and died; a multitude of accountants, book-keepers, and actuaries were born, and died. Still official routine inclined to these notched sticks, as if they were pillars of the constitution, and still the Exchequer accounts continued to be kept on certain splints of elm wood called "tallies." In the reign of George III. an inquiry was made by some revolutionary spirit, whether pens, ink, and paper, slates and pencils, being in existence, this obstinate adherence to an obsolete custom ought to be continued, and whether a change ought not to be effected.

All the red tape in the country grew redder at the bare mention of this bold and original conception, and it took till 1826 to get these sticks abolished. In 1834 it was

found that there was a considerable accumulation of them; and the question then arose, what was to be done with such worn-out, worm-eaten, rotten old bits of wood? I dare say there was a vast amount of minuting, memoranduming, and despatch-boxing, on this mighty subject. The sticks were housed at Westminster, and it would naturally occur to any intelligent person that nothing could be easier than to allow them to be carried away for firewood by the miserable people who live in that neighbourhood. However, they never had been useful, and official routine required that they never should be, and so the order went forth that they were to be privately and confidentially burnt. It came to pass that they were burnt in a stove in the House of Lords. The stove, overgorged with these preposterous sticks, set fire to the panelling; the panelling set fire to the House of Lords; the House of Lords set fire to the House of Commons; the two houses were reduced to ashes; architects were called in to build others; we are now in the second million of the cost thereof; the national pig is not nearly over the stile yet; and the little old woman, Britannia, hasn't got home to-night.

Now, I think we may reasonably remark, in conclusion, that all obstinate adherence to rubbish which the time has long outlived is certain to have in the soul of it more or less that is pernicious and destructive; and that will some day set fire to something or other; which, if given boldly to the winds would have been harmless; but which, obstinately retained, is ruinous. I believe myself that when Administrative Reform goes up it will be idle to hope to put it down, on this or that particular instance. The great, broad, and true cause that our public progress is far behind our private progress, and that we are not more remarkable for our private wisdom and success in matters of business than we are for our public folly and failure, I take to be as clearly established as the sun, moon, and stars. To set this right, and to clear the way in the country for merit everywhere: accepting it equally whether it be aristocratic or democratic, only asking whether it be honest or true, is, I take it, the true object of this Association. This object it seeks to promote by uniting together large numbers of the people, I hope, of all conditions, to the end that they may better com-

prehend, bear in mind, understand themselves, and impress upon others, the common public duty. Also, of which there is great need, that by keeping a vigilant eye on the skirmishers thrown out from time to time by the Party of Generals, they may see that their feints and manœuvres do not oppress the small defaulters and release the great, and that they do not gull the public with a mere field-day Review of Reform, instead of an earnest, hard-fought Battle. I have had no consultation with any one upon the subject, but I particularly wish that the directors may devise some means of enabling intelligent working men to join this body on easier terms than subscribers who have larger resources. I could wish to see great numbers of them belong to us, because I sincerely believe that it would be good for the common weal.

Said the noble Lord at the head of the Government, when Mr. Layard asked him for a day for his motion: "Let the hon. gentleman find a day for himself."

> Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
> Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed
> That he is grown so great?

If our Cæsar will excuse me, I would take the liberty of reversing that cool and lofty sentiment, and I would say: "First, Lord, your duty it is to see that no man is left to find a day for himself. See you, who take the responsibility of government, who aspire to it, live for it, intrigue for it, scramble for it, who hold to it tooth and nail when you can get it, see you that no man is left to find a day for himself. In this old country, with its seething hard-worked millions, its heavy taxes, its swarms of ignorant, its crowds of poor, and its crowds of wicked, woe the day when the dangerous man shall find a day for himself, because the head of the Government failed in his duty in not anticipating it by a brighter and a better one! Name you the day, First Lord; make a day; work for a day beyond your little time, Lord Palmerston, and History in return may then—not otherwise—find a day for you; a day equally associated with the contentment of the loyal, patient, willing-hearted English people, and with the happiness of your Royal Mistress and her fair line of children."

XVII.

London, *November* 5, 1857.

[At the fourth Anniversary Dinner of the Warehousemen and Clerks' Schools, which took place on Thursday evening, November 5, 1857, at the London Tavern, and was very numerously attended, Mr. Charles Dickens occupied the chair. On the subject which had brought the company together Mr. Dickens spoke as follows:]

I must now solicit your attention for a few minutes to the cause of your assembling together—the main and real object of this evening's gathering; for I suppose we are all agreed that the motto of these tables is not "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"; but "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we live." It is because a great and good work is to live to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to live a greater and better life with every succeeding to-morrow, that we eat and drink here at all. Conspicuous on the card of admission to this dinner is the word "Schools." This set me thinking this morning what are the sorts of schools that I don't like. I found them, on consideration, to be rather numerous. I don't like—to begin with, and to begin as charity does at home—I don't like the sort of school to which I once went myself—the respected proprietor of which was by far the most ignorant man I have ever had the pleasure to know; one of the worst-tempered men perhaps that ever lived; whose business it was to make as much out of us and put as little into us as possible, and who sold us at a figure which I remember we used to delight to estimate, as amounting to exactly £2 4s. 6d. per head. I don't like that sort of school, because I don't see what business the master had to be at the top of it instead of the bottom, and because I never could understand the wholesomeness of the moral preached by the abject appearance and degraded condition of the teachers who plainly said to us by their looks every day of their lives, "Boys, never be learned; whatever you are, above all things be warned from that in time by our sunken cheeks, by our poor pimply noses, by our meagre diet, by our acid-beer, and by our extraordinary suits of clothes, of which no human being can say whether they are snuff-coloured turned black, or black turned snuff-coloured, a point upon

which we ourselves are perfectly unable to offer any ray of enlightenment, it is so very long since they were undarned and new." I do not like that sort of school because I have never yet lost my ancient suspicion touching that curious coincidence that the boy with four brothers to come always got the prizes. In fact, and short, I do not like that sort of school, which is a pernicious and abominable humbug altogether. Again, ladies and gentlemen, I don't like that sort of school—a ladies' school—with which the other school used to dance on Wednesdays, where the young ladies, as I look back upon them now, seem to me always to have been in new stays and disgrace—the latter concerning a place of which I know nothing at this day, that bounds Timbuctoo on the north-east—and where memory always depicts the youthful enthraller of my first affection as for ever standing against a wall, in a curious machine of wood, which confined her innocent feet in the first dancing position, while those arms, which should have encircled my jacket, those precious arms, I say, were pinioned behind her by an instrument of torture called a backboard, fixed in the manner of a double direction post. Again, I don't like that sort of school, of which we have a notable example in Kent, which was established ages ago by worthy scholars and good men long deceased, whose munificent endowments have been monstrously perverted from their original purpose, and which, in their distorted condition, are struggled for and fought over with the most indecent pertinacity. Again, I don't like that sort of school—and I have seen a great many such in these latter times—where the bright childish imagination is utterly discouraged, and where those bright childish faces, which it is so very good for the wisest among us to remember in after life—when the world is too much with us, early and late—are gloomily and grimly scared out of countenance; where I have never seen among the pupils, whether boys or girls, anything but little parrots and small calculating machines. Again, I don't by any means like schools in leather breeches, and with mortified straw baskets for bonnets, which file along the streets in long melancholy rows under the escort of that surprising British monster—a beadle, whose system of instruction, I am afraid, too often presents that happy union of sound with

sense, of which a very remarkable instance is given in a grave report of a trustworthy school inspector, to the effect that a boy in great repute at school for his learning, presented on his slate, as one of the ten commandments, the perplexing prohibition, "Thou shall not commit doldrum." Ladies and gentlemen, I confess, also, that I don't like those schools, even though the instruction given in them be gratuitous, where those sweet little voices which ought to be heard speaking in very different accents, anathematise by rote any human being who does not hold what is taught there. Lastly, I do not like, and I did not like some years ago, cheap distant schools, where neglected children pine from year to year under an amount of neglect, want, and youthful misery far too sad even to be glanced at in this cheerful assembly.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, perhaps you will permit me to sketch in a few words the sort of school that I do like. It is a school established by the members of an industrious and useful order, which supplies the comforts and graces of life at every familiar turning in the road of our existence; it is a school established by them for the Orphan and Necessitous Children of their own brethren and sisterhood; it is a place giving an education worthy of them—an education by them invented, by them conducted, by them watched over; it is a place of education where, while the beautiful history of the Christian religion is daily taught, and while the life of that Divine Teacher who Himself took little children on His knees is daily studied, no sectarian ill-will nor narrow human dogma is permitted to darken the face of the clear heaven which they disclose. It is a children's school, which is at the same time no less a children's home, a home not to be confided to the care of cold or ignorant strangers, nor, by the nature of its foundation, in the course of ages to pass into hands that have as much natural right to deal with it as with the peaks of the highest mountains or with the depths of the sea, but to be from generation to generation administered by men living in precisely such homes as those poor children have lost; by men always bent upon making that replacement such a home as their own dear children might find a happy refuge in if they themselves were taken early away. And I fearlessly ask you, is this a design which has any claim

to your sympathy? Is this a sort of school which is deserving of your support?

This is the design, this is the school, whose strong and simple claim I have to lay before you to-night. I must particularly entreat you not to suppose that my fancy and unfortunate habit of fiction has anything to do with the picture I have just presented to you. It is sober matter of fact. The Warehousemen and Clerks' Schools, established for the maintaining, clothing, and educating of the Orphan and Necessitous Children of those employed in the wholesale trades and manufactures of the United Kingdom, are, in fact, what I have just described. These schools for both sexes were originated only four years ago. In the first six weeks of the undertaking the young men of themselves and quite unaided, subscribed the large sum of £3000. The schools have been opened only three years, they have now on their foundation thirty-nine children, and in a few days they will have six more, making a total of forty-five. They have been most munificently assisted by the heads of great mercantile houses, numerously represented, I am happy to say, around me, and they have a funded capital of almost £14,000. This is wonderful progress, but the aim must still be upwards, the motto always "Excelsior." You do not need to be told that five-and-forty children can form but a very small proportion of the Orphan and Necessitous Children of those who have been entrusted with the wholesale trades and manufactures of the United Kingdom: you do not require to be informed that the house at New Cross, rented for a small term of years, in which the schools are at present established, can afford but most imperfect accommodation for such a breadth of design. To carry this good work through the two remaining degrees of better and best, there must be more work, more co-operation, more friends, more money. Then be the friends and give the money. Before I conclude, there is one other feature in these schools which I would commend to your special attention and approval. Their benefits are reserved for the children of subscribers; that is to say, it is an essential principle of the institution that it must help those whose parents have helped them, and that the unfortunate children whose father has been so lax, or so criminal, as to withhold a subscription so

exceedingly small that when divided by weeks it amounts to only threepence weekly, cannot, in justice, be allowed to jostle out and shoulder away the happier children, whose father has had that little forethought, or done that little kindness which was requisite to secure for them the benefits of the institution. I really cannot believe that there will long be any such defaulting parents. I cannot believe that any of the intelligent young men who are engaged in the wholesale houses will long neglect this obvious, this easy duty. If they suppose that the objects of their love, born or unborn, will never want the benefits of the charity, that may be a fatal and blind mistake—it can never be an excuse, for, supposing them to be right in their anticipation, they should do what is asked for the sake of their friends and comrades around them, assured that they will be the happier and the better for the deed.

Ladies and gentlemen, this little "labour of love" of mine is now done. I most heartily wish that I could charm you now not to see me, not to think of me, not to hear me—I most heartily wish that I could make you see in my stead the multitude of innocent and bereaved children who are now looking towards these schools, and entreating with uplifted hands to be let in. A very famous advocate once said, in speaking of his fears of failure when he had first to speak in court, being very poor, that he felt his little children tugging at his skirts, and that recovered him. Will you think of the number of little children who are tugging at my skirts, when I ask you, in their names, on their behalf, and in their little persons, and in no strength of my own, to encourage and assist this work?

At a later period of the evening Mr. Dickens proposed the health of the President of the Institution, Lord John Russell. He said he should do nothing so superfluous and so unnecessary as to descant upon his lordship's many faithful, long, and great public services, upon the honour and integrity with which he had pursued his straightforward public course through every difficulty, or upon the manly, gallant, and courageous character which rendered him certain, in the eyes alike of friends and opponents, to rise with every rising occasion, and which, like the seal

of Solomon, in the old Arabian story, enclosed in a not very large casket the soul of a giant. In answer to loud cheers, he said he had felt perfectly certain that that would be the response; for in no English assembly that he had ever seen was it necessary to do more than mention the name of Lord John Russell to ensure a manifestation of personal respect and grateful remembrance.

XVIII.

London, *February* 9, 1858.

[At the Anniversary Festival of the Hospital for Sick Children, on Tuesday, February the 9th, 1858, about one hundred and fifty gentlemen sat down to dinner, in the Freemasons' Hall. Later in the evening all the seats in the gallery were filled with ladies interested in the success of the Hospital. After the usual loyal and other toasts, the Chairman, Mr. Dickens, proposed "Prosperity to the Hospital for Sick Children," and said:]

Ladies and Gentlemen—It is one of my rules in life not to believe a man who may happen to tell me that he feels no interest in children. I hold myself bound to this principle by all kind consideration, because I know, as we all must, that any heart which could really toughen its affections and sympathies against those dear little people must be wanting in so many humanising experiences of innocence and tenderness, as to be quite an unsafe monstrosity among men. Therefore I set the assertion down, whenever I happen to meet with it—which is sometimes, though not often—as an idle word, originating possibly in the genteel languor of the hour, and meaning about as much as that knowing social lassitude, which has used up the cardinal virtues and quite found out things in general, usually does mean. I suppose it may be taken for granted that we, who come together in the name of children and for the sake of children, acknowledge that we have an interest in them; indeed, I have observed since I sat down here that we are quite in a childlike state altogether, representing an infant institution, and not even yet a grown-up company. A few years are necessary to the increase of our strength and the expansion of our figure; and then these tables, which now have a few tucks in them, will be let out, and then this hall, which now sits so easily upon us, will be

too tight and small for us. Nevertheless, it is likely that even we are not without our experience now and then of spoilt children. I do not mean of our own spoilt children, because nobody's own children ever were spoilt, but I mean the disagreeable children of our particular friends. We know by experience what it is to have them down after dinner, and, across the rich perspective of a miscellaneous dessert, to see, as in a black dose darkly, the family doctor looming in the distance. We know, I have no doubt we all know, what it is to assist at those little maternal anecdotes and table entertainments illustrated with imitations and descriptive dialogue which might not be inaptly called, after the manner of my friend Mr. Albert Smith, the toilsome ascent of Miss Mary and the eruption (cutaneous) of Master Alexander. We know what it is when those children won't go to bed; we know how they prop their eyelids open with their forefingers when they will sit up; how, when they become fractious, they say aloud that they don't like us, and our nose is too long, and why don't we go? And we are perfectly acquainted with those kicking bundles which are carried off at last protesting. An eminent eye-witness told me that he was one of a company of learned pundits who assembled at the house of a very distinguished philosopher of the last generation to hear him expound his stringent views concerning infant education and early mental development, and he told me that while the philosopher did this in very beautiful and lucid language, the philosopher's little boy, for his part, edified the assembled sages by dabbling up to the elbows in an apple pie which had been provided for their entertainment, having previously anointed his hair with the syrup, combed it with his fork, and brushed it with his spoon. It is probable that we also have our similar experiences sometimes, of principles that are not quite practice, and that we know people claiming to be very wise and profound about nations of men who show themselves to be rather weak and shallow about units of babies.

But, ladies and gentlemen, the spoilt children whom I have to present to you after this dinner of to-day are not of this class. I have glanced at these for the easier and lighter introduction of another, a very different, a far more numerous, and a far more serious class. The

spoilt children whom I must show you are the spoilt children of the poor in this great city, the children who are, every year, for ever and ever irrevocably spoilt out of this breathing life of ours by tens of thousands, but who may in vast numbers be preserved if you, assisting and not contravening the ways of Providence, will help to save them. The two grim nurses, Poverty and Sickness, who bring these children before you, preside over their births, rock their wretched cradles, nail down their little coffins, pile up the earth above their graves. Of the annual deaths in this great town, their unnatural deaths form more than one-third. I shall not ask you, according to the custom as to the other class—I shall not ask you on behalf of these children to observe how good they are, how pretty they are, how clever they are, how promising they are, whose beauty they most resemble—I shall only ask you to observe how weak they are, and how like death they are! And I shall ask you, by the remembrance of everything that lies between your own infancy and that so miscalled second childhood when the child's graces are gone, and nothing but its helplessness remains; I shall ask you to turn your thoughts to *these* spoilt children in the sacred names of Pity and Compassion.

Some years ago, being in Scotland, I went with one of the most humane members of the humane medical profession, on a morning tour among some of the worst lodged inhabitants of the old town of Edinburgh. In the closes and wynds of that picturesque place—I am sorry to remind you what fast friends picturesqueness and typhus often are—we saw more poverty and sickness in an hour than many people would believe in a life. Our way lay from one to another of the most wretched dwellings, reeking with horrible odours; shut out from the sky, shut out from the air, mere pits and dens. In a room in one of these places, where there was an empty porridge-pot on the cold hearth, with a ragged woman and some ragged children crouching on the bare ground near it—where I remember as I speak that the very light, refracted from a high damp-stained and time-stained house-wall, came trembling in, as if the fever which had shaken everything else there had shaken even it—there lay, in an old egg-box which the mother had begged from a shop, a little feeble, wasted, wan, sick child. With

his little wasted face, and his little hot, worn hands folded over his breast, and his little bright, attentive eyes, I can see him now, as I have seen him for several years, looking steadily at us. There he lay in his little frail box, which was not at all a bad emblem of the little body from which he was slowly parting—there he lay, quite quiet, quite patient, saying never a word. He seldom cried, the mother said; he seldom complained; "he lay there, seemin' to woonder what it was a' aboot." God knows, I thought, as I stood looking at him, he had his reasons for wondering—reasons for wondering how it could possibly come to be that he lay there, left alone, feeble and full of pain, when he ought to have been as bright and as brisk as the birds that never got near him —reasons for wondering how he came to be left there, a little decrepid old man pining to death, quite a thing of course, as if there were no crowds of healthy and happy children playing on the grass under the summer's sun within a stone's throw of him, as if there were no bright, moving sea on the other side of the great hill overhanging the city; as if there were no great clouds rushing over it; as if there were no life, and movement, and vigour anywhere in the world—nothing but stoppage and decay. There he lay looking at us, saying, in his silence more pathetically than I have ever heard anything said by any orator in my life, "Will you please to tell me what this means strange man? and if you can give me any good reason why I should be so soon, so far advanced on my way to Him who said that children were to come into His presence, and were not to be forbidden, but who scarcely meant, I think, that they should come by this hard road by which I am travelling, pray give that reason to me, for I seek it very earnestly and wonder about it very much"; and to my mind he has been wondering about it ever since. Many a poor child, sick and neglected, I have seen since that time in this London; many a poor sick child I have seen most affectionately and kindly tended by poor people, in an unwholesome house and under untoward circumstances, wherein its recovery was quite impossible; but at all such times I have seen my poor little drooping friend in his egg-box, and he has always addressed his dumb speech to me, and I have always found him wondering what it meant, and

why, in the name of a Gracious God, such things should be!

Now, ladies and gentlemen, such things need not be, and will not be, if this company, which is a drop of the life-blood of the great compassionate public heart, will only accept the means of rescue and prevention which it is mine to offer. Within a quarter of a mile of this place where I speak, stands a courtly old house, where once, no doubt, blooming children were born, and grew up to be men and women, and married, and brought their own blooming children back to patter up the old staircase which stood but the other day, and to wonder at the old oak carvings on the chimney-pieces. In the airy wards into which the old state drawing-rooms and family bedchambers of that house are now converted are such little patients that the attendant nurses look like reclaimed giantesses, and the kind medical practitioner like an amiable Christian ogre. Grouped about the little low tables in the centre of the rooms are such tiny convalescents that they seem to be playing at having been ill. On the doll's beds are such diminutive creatures that each poor sufferer is supplied with its trays of toys; and, looking round, you may see how the little tired flushed cheek has toppled over half the brute creation on its way into the ark; or how one little dimpled arm has mowed down (as I saw myself) the whole tin soldiery of Europe. On the walls of these rooms are graceful, pleasant, bright, childish pictures. At the beds' heads are pictures of the figure which is the universal embodiment of all mercy and compassion, the figure of Him who was once a child Himself, and a poor one. Besides these little creatures on the beds, you may learn in that place that the number of small Out-patients brought to that house for relief is no fewer than ten thousand in the compass of one single year. In the room in which these are received, you may see against the wall a box, on which it is written, that it has been calculated, that if every grateful mother who brings a child there will drop a penny into it, the Hospital funds may possibly be increased in a year by so large a sum as forty pounds. And you may read in the Hospital Report, with a glow of pleasure, that these poor women are so respondent as to have made, even in a toiling year of difficulty and high prices, this estimated forty, fifty

pounds. In the printed papers of this same Hospital, you may read with what a generous earnestness the highest and wisest members of the medical profession testify to the great need of it; to the immense difficulty of treating children in the same hospitals with grown-up people, by reason of their difficult ailments and requirements, to the vast amount of pain that will be assuaged, and of life that will be saved, through this Hospital; not only among the poor, observe, but among the prosperous, too, by reason of the increased knowledge of children's illnesses, which cannot fail to arise from a more systematic mode of studying them. Lastly, gentlemen, and I am sorry to say, worst of all—(for I must present no rose-coloured picture of this place to you—I must not deceive you;) lastly, the visitor to this Children's Hospital, reckoning up the number of its beds, will find himself perforce obliged to stop at very little over thirty; and will learn, with sorrow and surprise, that even that small number, so forlornly, so miserably diminutive, compared with this vast London, cannot possibly be maintained, unless the Hospital be made better known; I limit myself to saying better known, because I will not believe that in a Christian community of fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, it can fail, being better known, to be well and richly endowed.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, this, without a word of adornment—which I resolved when I got up not to allow myself—this is the simple case. This is the pathetic case which I have to put to you; not only on behalf of the thousands of children who annually die in this great city, but also on behalf of the thousands of children who live half developed, racked with preventable pain, shorn of their natural capacity for health and enjoyment. If these innocent creatures cannot move you for themselves, how can I possibly hope to move you in their name? The most delightful paper, the most charming essay, which the tender imagination of Charles Lamb conceived, represents him as sitting by his fireside on a winter night telling stories to his own dear children, and delighting in their society, until he suddenly comes to his old, solitary, bachelor self, and finds that they were but dream-children who might have been, but never were. "We are nothing," they say to him; "less than nothing, and dreams. We

are only what might have been, and we must wait upon the tedious shore of Lethe, millions of ages, before we have existence and a name." "And immediately awakening," he says, "I found myself in my arm chair." The dream-children whom I would now raise, if I could, before every one of you, according to your various circumstances, should be the dear child you love, the dearer child you have lost, the child you might have had, the child you certainly have been. Each of these dream-children should hold in its powerful hand one of the little children now lying in the Child's Hospital, or now shut out of it to perish. Each of these dream-children should say to you, "O, help this little suppliant in my name; O, help it for my sake!" Well!—And immediately awaking, you should find yourself in the Freemasons' Hall, happily arrived at the end of a rather long speech, drinking "Prosperity to the Hospital for Sick Children," and thoroughly resolved that it shall flourish.

XIX.

London, *March* 29, 1858.

[At the thirteenth Anniversary Festival of the General Theatrical Fund, held at the Freemasons' Tavern, at which Thackeray presided, Mr. Dickens made the following speech:]

In our theatrical experience as playgoers we are all equally accustomed to predict by certain little signs and portents on the stage what is going to happen there. When the young lady, an admiral's daughter, is left alone to indulge in a short soliloquy, and certain smart spirit-rappings are heard to proceed immediately from beneath her feet, we foretell that a song is impending. When two gentlemen enter, for whom, by a happy coincidence, two chairs, and no more, are in waiting, we augur a conversation, and that it will assume a retrospective biographical character. When any of the performers who belong to the seafaring or marauding professions are observed to arm themselves with very small swords to which are attached very large hilts, we predict that the affair will end in a combat. Carrying out the association of ideas, it may have occurred to some that when I asked my old friend in the chair to allow me to propose a toast I had him in my eye; and I have him now on my lips.

The duties of a trustee of the Theatrical Fund, an office which I hold, are not so frequent or so great as its privileges. He is in fact a mere walking gentleman, with the melancholy difference that he has no one to love. If this advantage could be added to his character it would be one of a more agreeable nature than it is, and his forlorn position would be greatly improved. His duty is to call every half year at the bankers', when he signs his name in a large greasy inconvenient book, to certain documents of which he knows nothing, and then he delivers it to the property man and exits anywhere.

He, however, has many privileges. It is one of his privileges to watch the steady growth of an institution in which he takes great interest; is is one of his privileges to bear his testimony to the prudence, the goodness, the self-denial, and the excellence of a class of persons who have been too long depreciated, and whose virtues are too much denied, out of the depths of an ignorant and stupid superstition. And lastly, it is one of his privileges sometimes to be called on to propose the health of the chairman at the annual dinners of the institution, when that chairman is one for whose genius he entertains the warmest admiration, and whom he respects as a friend, and as one who does honour to literature, and in whom literature is honoured. I say when that is the case, he feels that this last privilege is a great and high one. From the earliest days of this institution I have ventured to impress on its managers, that they would consult its credit and success by choosing its chairman as often as possible within the circle of literature and the arts; and I will venture to say that no similar institution has been presided over by so many remarkable and distinguished men. I am sure, however, that it never has had, and that it never will have, simply because it cannot have, a greater lustre cast upon it than by the presence of the noble English writer who fills the chair to-night.

It is not for me at this time, and in this place, to take on myself to flutter before you the well-thumbed pages of Mr. Thackeray's books, and to tell you to observe how full they are of wit and wisdom, how outspeaking, and how devoid of fear or favour; but I will take leave to remark, in paying my due homage and respect to them, that it is fitting that such a writer and such an institution

should be brought together. Every writer of fiction, although he may not adopt the dramatic form, writes in effect for the stage. He may never write plays; but the truth and passion which are in him must be more or less reflected in the great mirror which he holds up to nature. Actors, managers, and authors are all represented in this company, and it may be supposed that they all have studied the deep wants of the human heart in many theatres; but none of them could have studied its mysterious workings in any theatre to greater advantage than in the bright and airy pages of "Vanity Fair." To this skilful showman, who has so often delighted us, and who has charmed us again to-night, we have now to wish God-speed, and that he may continue for many years* to exercise his potent art. To him fill a bumper toast, and fervently utter, God bless him!

XX.

Coventry, *December* 4, 1858.

[On the above evening, a public dinner was held at the Castle Hotel, on the occasion of the presentation to Mr. Charles Dickens of a gold watch, as a mark of gratitude for the reading of his "Christmas Carol," given in December of the previous year, in aid of the funds of the Coventry Institute. The chair was taken by C. W. Hoskyns, Esq. Mr. Dickens acknowledged the testimonial in the following words:]

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and Gentlemen—I hope your minds will be greatly relieved by my assuring you that it is one of the rules of my life never to make a speech about myself. If I knowingly did so, under any circumstances, it would be least of all under such circumstances as these, when its effect on my acknowledgment of your kind regard, and this pleasant proof of it, would be to give me a certain constrained air, which I fear would contrast badly with your greeting, so cordial, so unaffected, so earnest, and so true. Furthermore, your Chairman has decorated the occasion with a little garland of good sense, good feeling, and good taste; so that I am

*Alas! the "many years" were to be barely six, when the speaker was himself destined to write some memorial pages commemorative of his illustrious friend ("Cornhill Magazine," February, 1864).—Ed.

sure that any attempt at additional ornament would be almost an impertinence.

Therefore I will at once say how earnestly, how fervently, and how deeply I feel your kindness. This watch, with which you have presented me, shall be my companion in my hours of sedentary working at home, and in my wanderings abroad. It shall never be absent from my side, and it shall reckon off the labours of my future days, and I can assure you that after this night the object of those labours will not less than before be to uphold the right and to do good. And when I have done with time and its measurement, this watch shall belong to my children; and as I have seven boys, and as they have all begun to serve their country in various ways, or to elect into what distant regions they shall roam, it is not only possible, but probable, that this little voice will be heard scores of years hence, who knows? in some yet unfounded city in the wilds of Australia, or communicating Greenwich time to Coventry Street, Japan.

Once again, and finally, I thank you; and from my heart of hearts, I can assure you that the memory of to-night, and of your picturesque and interesting city, will never be absent from my mind, and I can never more hear the lightest mention of the name of Coventry without having inspired in my breast sentiments of unusual emotion and unusual attachment.

[Later in the evening, in proposing the health of the Chairman, Mr. Dickens said:]

There may be a great variety of conflicting opinions with regard to farming, and especially with reference to the management of a clay farm; but, however various opinions as to the merits of a clay farm may be, there can be but one opinion as to the merits of a clay farmer—and it is the health of that distinguished agriculturist which I have to propose.

In my ignorance of the subject, I am bound to say that it may be, for anything I know, indeed I am ready to admit that it *is*, exceedingly important that a clay farm should go for a number of years to waste; but I claim some knowledge as to the management of a clay farmer, and I positively object to his ever lying fallow. In the hope that this very rich and teeming individual may

speedily be ploughed up, and that we shall gather into our barns and store-houses the admirable crop of wisdom, which must spring up whenever he is sown, I take leave to propose his health, begging to assure him that the kind manner in which he offered to me your very valuable present, I can never forget.

XXI.

LONDON, *March* 29, 1862.

[At a Dinner of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution, the following Address was delivered by Mr. Charles Dickens from the chair:]

SEVEN or eight years ago, without the smallest expectation of ever being called upon to fill the chair at an anniversary festival of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution, and without the remotest reference to such an occasion, I selected the administration of that Charity as the model on which I desired that another should be reformed, both as regarded the mode in which the relief was afforded and the singular economy with which its funds were administered. As a proof of the latter quality during the past year, the cost of distributing £1126 among the recipients of the bounty of the Charity amounted to little more than £100, inclusive of all office charges and expenses. The experience and knowledge of those entrusted with the management of the funds are a guarantee that the last available farthing of the funds will be distributed among proper and deserving recipients. Claiming, on my part, to be related in some degree to the profession of an artist, I disdain to stoop to ask for charity, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, on behalf of the Artists. In its broader and higher signification of generous confidence, lasting trustfulness, love and confiding belief, I very readily associate that cardinal virtue with art. I decline to present the artist to the notice of the public as a grown-up child, or as a strange, unaccountable, moon-stricken person, waiting helplessly in the street of life to be helped over the road by the crossing-sweeper; on the contrary, I present the artist as a reasonable creature, a sensible gentleman, and as one well acquainted with the value of his time, and that of other people, as if he were in the habit of going on high 'Change

every day. The Artist whom I wish to present to the notice of the Meeting is one to whom the perfect enjoyment of the five senses is essential to every achievement of his life. He can gain no wealth nor fame by buying something which he never touched, and selling it to another who would also never touch or see it, but was compelled to strike out for himself every spark of fire which lighted, burned, and perhaps consumed him. He must win the battle of life with his own hand, and with his own eyes, and was obliged to act as general, captain, ensign, non-commissioned officer, private, drummer, great arms, small arms, infantry, cavalry, all in his own unaided self. When, therefore, I ask help for the artist, I do not make my appeal for one who was a cripple from his birth, but I ask it as part payment of a great debt which all sensible and civilised creatures owe to art, as a mark of respect to art, as a decoration—not as a badge—as a remembrance of what this land, or any land, would be without art, and as the token of an appreciation of the works of the most successful artists of this country. With respect to the society of which I am the advocate, I am gratified that it is so liberally supported by the most distinguished artists, and that it has the confidence of men who occupy the highest rank as artists, above the reach of reverses, and the most distinguished in success and fame, and whose support is above all price. Artists who have obtained wide-world reputation know well that many deserving and persevering men, or their widows and orphans, have received help from this fund, and some of the artists who have received this help are now enrolled among the subscribers to the Institution.

XXII.

London, *May* 20, 1862.

[The following speech was made by Mr. Dickens, in his capacity as Chairman, at the Annual Festival of the Newsvendors' Benevolent and Provident Institution, held at the Freemasons' Tavern on the above date:]

When I had the honour of being asked to preside last year, I was prevented by indisposition, and I besought my friend, Mr. Wilkie Collins, to reign in my stead. He very kindly complied, and made an excellent speech.

Now I tell you the truth, that I read that speech with considerable uneasiness, for it inspired me with a strong misgiving that I had better have presided last year with neuralgia in my face and my subject in my head, rather than preside this year with my neuralgia all gone and my subject anticipated. Therefore, I wish to preface the toast this evening by making the managers of this Institution one very solemn and repentant promise, and it is, if ever I find myself obliged to provide a substitute again, they may rely upon my sending the most speechless man of my acquaintance.

The Chairman last year presented you with an amiable view of the universality of the newsman's calling. Nothing, I think, is left for me but to imagine the newsman's burden itself, to unfold one of those wonderful sheets which he every day disseminates, and to take a bird's-eye view of its general character and contents. So, if you please, choosing my own time—though the newsman cannot choose his time, for he must be equally active in winter or summer, in sunshine or sleet, in light or darkness, early or late—but, choosing my own time, I shall for two or three moments start off with the newsman on a fine May morning, and take a view of the wonderful broadsheets which every day he scatters broadcast over the country. Well, the first thing that occurs to me following the newsman is, that every day we are born, that every day we are married—some of us—and that every day we are dead; consequently, the first thing the newsvendor's column informs me is, that Atkins has been born, that Catkins has been married, and that Datkins is dead. But the most remarkable thing I immediately discover in the next column, is that Atkins has grown to be seventeen years old, and that he has run away; for, at last, my eye lights on the fact that William A., who is seventeen years old, is adjured immediately to return to his disconsolate parents, and everything will be arranged to the satisfaction of every one. I am afraid he will never return, simply because if he had meant to come back, he would never have gone away. Immediately below, I find a mysterious character in such a mysterious difficulty that it is only to be expressed by several disjointed letters, by several figures, and several stars; and then I find the explanation in the intimation that the writer has

given his property over to his uncle, and that the elephant is on the wing. Then, still glancing over the shoulder of my industrious friend, the newsman, I find there are great fleets of ships bound to all parts of the earth, that they all want a little more stowage, a little more cargo, that they have a few more berths to let, that they have all the most spacious decks, that they are all built of teak, and copper-bottomed, that they all carry surgeons of experience, and that they are all A1 at Lloyds', and anywhere else. Still glancing over the shoulder of my friend the newsman, I find I am offered all kinds of house-lodging, clerks, servants, and situations, which I can possibly or impossibly want. I learn, to my intense gratification, that I need never grow old, that I may always preserve the juvenile bloom of my complexion; that if ever I turn ill it is entirely my own fault; that if I have any complaint, and want brown cod-liver oil or Turkish baths, I am told where to get them, and that, if I want an income of seven pounds a week, I may have it by sending half-a-crown in postage stamps. Then I look to the police intelligence, and I can discover that I may bite off a human living nose cheaply, but if I take off the dead nose of a pig or a calf from a shop-window, it will cost me exceedingly dear. I also find that if I allow myself to be betrayed into the folly of killing an inoffensive tradesman on his own door-step, that little incident will not affect the testimonials to my character, but that I shall be described as a most amiable young man, and as, above all things, remarkable for the singular inoffensiveness of my character and disposition. Then I turn my eye to the Fine Arts, and, under that head, I see that a certain "J. O." has most triumphantly exposed a certain "J. O. B.," which "J. O. B." was remarkable for this particular ugly feature, that I was requested to deprive myself of the best of my pictures for six months; that for that time it was to be hung on a wet wall, and that I was to be requited for my courtesy in having my picture most impertinently covered with a wet blanket. To sum up the results of a glance over my newsman's shoulder, it gives a comprehensive knowledge of what is going on over the continent of Europe, and also of what is going on over the continent of America, to say nothing of such little geographical regions as India and China.

Now, my friends, this is the glance over the newsman's shoulder from the whimsical point of view, which is the point, I believe, that most promotes digestion. The newsman is to be met with on steamboats, railway stations, and at every turn. His profits are small, he has a great amount of anxiety and care, and no little amount of personal wear and tear. He is indispensable to civilisation and freedom, and he is looked for with pleasurable excitement every day, except when he lends the paper for an hour, and when he is punctual in calling for it, which is sometimes very painful. I think the lesson we can learn from our newsman is some new illustration of the uncertainty of life, some illustration of its vicissitudes and fluctuations. Mindful of this permanent lesson, some members of the trade originated this society, which affords them assistance in time of sickness and indigence. The subscription is infinitesimal. It amounts annually to five shillings. Looking at the returns before me, the progress of the society would seem to be slow, but it has only been slow for the best of all reasons, that it has been sure. The pensions granted are all obtained from the interest on the funded capital, and, therefore, the Institution is literally as safe as the Bank. It is stated that there are several newsvendors who are not members of this society; but that is true in all institutions which have come under my experience. The persons who are most likely to stand in need of the benefits which an institution confers, are usually the persons to keep away until bitter experience comes to them too late.

XXIII.

NEWSPAPER TRUST FUND.

London, *May* 20, 1865.

[At the second Annual Dinner of the Institution, held at the Freemasons' Tavern, on Saturday, the 20th May, 1865, the following speech was delivered by the chairman, Mr. Charles Dickens, in proposing the toast of the evening:]

Ladies and Gentlemen—When a young child is produced after dinner to be shown to a circle of admiring friends, it may generally be observed that their conver-

sation—I suppose in an instinctive remembrance of the uncertainty of infant life—takes a retrospective turn. As how much the child has grown since the last dinner; what a remarkably fine child it is, to have been born only two or three years ago, how much stronger it looks now than before it had the measles, and so forth. When a young institution is produced after dinner, there is not the same uncertainty or delicacy as in the case of the child, and it may be confidently predicted of it that if it deserve to live it will surely live, and that if it deserve to die it will surely die. The proof of desert in such a case as this must be mainly sought, I suppose, firstly, in what the society means to do with its money; secondly, in the extent to which it is supported by the class with whom it originated, and for whose benefit it is designed; and, lastly, in the power of its hold upon the public. I add this lastly, because no such institution that ever I heard of ever yet dreamed of existing apart from the public, or ever yet considered it a degradation to accept the public support.

Now, what the Newspaper Press Fund proposes to do with its money is to grant relief to members in want or distress, and to the widows, families, parents, or other near relatives of deceased members in right of a moderate provident annual subscription—commutable, I observe, for a moderate provident life subscription—and its members comprise the whole paid class of literary contributors to the press of the United Kingdom, and every class of reporters. The number of its members at this time last year was something below 100. At the present time it is somewhat above 170, not including 30 members of the press who are regular subscribers, but have not as yet qualified as regular members. This number is steadily on the increase, not only as regards the metropolitan press, but also as regards the provincial throughout the country. I have observed within these few days that many members of the press at Manchester have lately at a meeting expressed a strong brotherly interest in this Institution, and a great desire to extend its operations, and to strengthen its hands, provided that something in the independent nature of life assurance and the purchase of deferred annuities could be introduced into its details, and always assuming that in it the metropolis

and the provinces stand on perfectly equal ground. This appears to me to be a demand so very moderate, that I can hardly have a doubt of a response on the part of the managers, or of the beneficial and harmonious results. It only remains to add, on this head of desert, the agreeable circumstance that out of all the money collected in aid of the society during the last year more than one-third came exclusively from the press.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, in regard to the last claim —the last point of desert—the hold upon the public—I think I may say that probably not one single individual in this great company has failed to-day to see a newspaper, or has failed to-day to hear something derived from a newspaper which was quite unknown to him or to her yesterday. Of all those restless crowds that have this day thronged the streets of this enormous city, the same may be said as the general gigantic rule. It may be said almost equally, of the brightest and the dullest, the largest and the least provincial town in the empire; and this, observe, not only as to the active, the industrious, and the healthy among the population, but also to the bedridden, the idle, the blind, and the deaf and dumb. Now, if the men who provide this all-pervading presence, this wonderful, ubiquitous newspaper, with every description of intelligence on every subject of human interest, collected with immense pains and immense patience, often by the exercise of a laboriously-acquired faculty united to a natural aptitude, much of the work done in the night, at the sacrifice of rest and sleep, and (quite apart from the mental strain) by the constant overtasking of the two most delicate of the senses, sight and hearing—I say, if the men who, through the newspapers, from day to day, or from night to night, or from week to week, furnish the public with so much to remember, have not a righteous claim to be remembered by the public in return, then I declare before God I know no working class of the community who have.

It would be absurd, it would be impertinent, in such an assembly as this, if I were to attempt to expatiate upon the extraordinary combination of remarkable qualities involved in the production of any newspaper. But assuming the majority of this associated body to be composed of reporters, because reporters, of one kind or other,

compose the majority of the literary staff of almost any newspaper that is not a compilation, I would venture to remind you, if I delicately may, in the august presence of members of Parliament, how much we, the public, owe to the reporters if it were only for their skill in the two great sciences of condensation and rejection. Conceive what our sufferings, under an Imperial Parliament, however popularly constituted, under however glorious a constitution, would be if the reporters could not skip. Dr. Johnson, in one of his violent assertions, declared that "the man who was afraid of anything must be a scoundrel, sir." By no means binding myself to this opinion—though admitting that the man who is afraid of a newspaper will generally be found to be rather something like it, I must still freely own that I should approach my Parliamentary debate with infinite fear and trembling if it were so unskilfully served up for my breakfast. Ever since the time when the old man and his son took their donkey home, which were the old Greek days, I believe, and probably ever since the time when the donkey went into the ark—perhaps he did not like his accommodation there—but certainly from that time downwards, he has objected to go in any direction required of him—from the remotest periods it has been found impossible to please everybody.

I do not for a moment seek to conceal that I know this Institution has been objected to. As an open fact challenging the freest discussion and inquiry, and seeking no sort of shelter or favour but what it can win, it has nothing, I apprehend, but itself, to urge against objection. No institution conceived in perfect honesty and good faith has a right to object to being questioned to any extent, and any institution so based must be in the end the better for it. Moreover, that this society has been questioned in quarters deserving of the most respectful attention I take to be an indisputable fact. Now, I for one have given that respectful attention, and I have come out of the discussion to where you see me. The whole circle of the arts is pervaded by institutions between which and this I can descry no difference. The painters' art has four or five such institutions. The musicians' art, so generously and charmingly represented here, has likewise several such institutions. In my own art there is one, concern-

ing the details of which my noble friend the president of the society and myself have torn each other's hair to a considerable extent, and which I would, if I could, assimilate more nearly to this. In the dramatic art there are four, and I never yet heard of any objection to their principle, except, indeed, in the cases of some famous actors of large gains, who having through the whole period of their successes positively refused to establish a right in them, became, in their old age and decline, repentant suppliants for their bounty. It is urged against this particular Institution, that it is objectionable because a parliamentary reporter, for instance, might report a subscribing M.P. in large, and a non-subscribing M.P. in little. Apart from the sweeping nature of this charge, which, it is to be observed, lays the unfortunate member and the unfortunate reporter under pretty much the same suspicion—apart from this consideration, I reply that it is notorious in all newspaper offices that every such man is reported according to the position he can gain in the public eye, and according to the force and weight of what he has to say. And if there were ever to be among the members of this society one so very foolish to his brethren, and so very dishonourable to himself, as venally to abuse his trust, I confidently ask those here, the best acquainted with journalism, whether they believe it possible that any newspaper so ill-conducted as to fail instantly to detect him could possibly exist as a thriving enterprise for one single twelvemonth? No, ladies and gentlemen, the blundering stupidity of such an offence would have no chance against the acute sagacity of newspaper editors. But I will go further, and submit to you that its commission, if it be to be dreaded at all, is far more likely on the part of some recreant camp-follower of a scattered, disunited, and half-recognised profession, than when there is a public opinion established in it, by the union of all classes of its members for the common good: the tendency of which union must in the nature of things be to raise the lower members of the press towards the higher, and never to bring the higher members to the lower level.

I hope I may be allowed in the very few closing words that I feel a desire to say in remembrance of some circumstances, rather special, attending my present occupation of this chair, to give those words something of a personal

tone. I am not here advocating the case of a mere ordinary client of whom I have little or no knowledge. I hold a brief to-night for my brothers. I went into the gallery of the House of Commons as a parliamentary reporter when I was a boy not eighteen, and I left it—I can hardly believe the inexorable truth—nigh thirty years ago. I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren at home in England here, many of my modern successors, can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches in which the strictest accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been to a young man severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. The very last time I was at Exeter, I strolled into the castle yard there to identify, for the amusement of a friend, the spot on which I once "took," as we used to call it, an election speech of my noble friend Lord Russell, in the midst of a lively fight maintained by all the vagabonds in that division of the county, and under such a pelting rain, that I remember two good-natured colleagues, who chanced to be at leisure, held a pocket-handkerchief over my note-book, after the manner of a state canopy in an ecclesiastical procession. I have worn my knees by writing on them on the old back row of the old gallery of the old House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords, where we used to be huddled together like so many sheep—kept in waiting, say, until the woolsack might want re-stuffing. Returning home from excited political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been, in my time, belated on miry by-roads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken postboys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never-forgotten compliments by the late Mr. Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew.

Ladies and gentlemen, I mention these trivial things as an assurance to you that I never have forgotten the fascination of that old pursuit. The pleasure that I used to feel in the rapidity and dexterity of its exercise has never faded out of my breast. Whatever little cunning of hand or head I took to it, or acquired in it, I have so retained as that I fully believe I could resume it to-morrow, very little the worse from long disuse. To this present year of my life, when I sit in this hall, or where not, hearing a dull speech—the phenomenon does occur—I sometimes beguile the tedium of the moment by mentally following the speaker in the old, old way; and sometimes, if you can believe me, I even find my hand going on the tablecloth, taking an imaginary note of it all. Accept these little truths as a confirmation of what I know; as a confirmation of my undying interest in this old calling. Accept them as a proof that my feeling for the vocation of my youth is not a sentiment taken up to-night to be thrown away to-morrow—but is a faithful sympathy which is a part of myself. I verily believe—I am sure—that if I had never quitted my old calling I should have been foremost and zealous in the interests of this Institution, believing it to be a sound, a wholesome, and a good one. Ladies and gentlemen, I am to propose to you to drink "Prosperity to the Newspaper Press Fund," with which toast I will connect, as to its acknowledgment, a name that has shed new brilliancy on even the foremost newspaper in the world—the illustrious name of Mr. Russell.

XXIV.

London, *June* 5, 1867.

[On the above date Mr. Dickens presided at the ninth Anniversary Festival of the Railway Benevolent Society, at Willis's Rooms, and in proposing the toast of the evening, made the following speech:]

Although we have not yet left behind us by the distance of nearly fifty years the time when one of the first literary authorities of this country insisted upon the speed of the fastest railway train that the Legislature might disastrously sanction being limited by Act of Parliament to ten miles an hour, yet it does somehow happen that this evening, and every evening, there are railway trains

running pretty smoothly to Ireland and to Scotland at the rate of fifty miles an hour; much as it was objected in its time to vaccination, that it must have a tendency to impart to human children something of the nature of the cow, whereas I believe to this very time vaccinated children are found to be as easily defined from calves as they ever were, and certainly they have no cheapening influence on the price of veal; much as it was objected that chloroform was a contravention of the will of Providence, because it lessened providentially-inflicted pain, which would be a reason for your not rubbing your face if you had the toothache, or not rubbing your nose if it itched; so it was evidently predicted that the railway system, even if anything so absurd could be productive of any result, would infallibly throw half the nation out of employment; whereas, you observe that the very cause and occasion of our coming here together to-night is, apart from the various tributary channels of occupation which it has opened out, that it has called into existence a specially and directly employed population of upwards of 200,000 persons.

Now, gentlemen, it is pretty clear and obvious that upwards of 200,000 persons engaged upon the various railways of the United Kingdom cannot be rich; and although their duties require great care and great exactness, and although our lives are every day, humanly speaking, in the hands of many of them, still, for the most of these places there will be always great competition, because they are not posts which require skilled workmen to hold. Wages, as you know very well, cannot be high where competition is great, and you also know very well that railway directors, in the bargains they make, and the salaries which they pay, have to deal with the money of the shareholders, to whom they are accountable. Thus it necessarily happens that railway officers and servants are not remunerated on the whole by any means splendidly, and that they cannot hope in the ordinary course of things to do more than meet the ordinary wants and hazards of life. But it is to be observed that the general hazards are in their case, by reason of the dangerous nature of their avocations, exceptionally great; so very great, I find, as to be stateable, on the authority of a parliamentary paper, by the very startling round of figures, that

whereas one railway traveller in 8,000,000 of passengers is killed, one railway servant in every 2000 is killed.

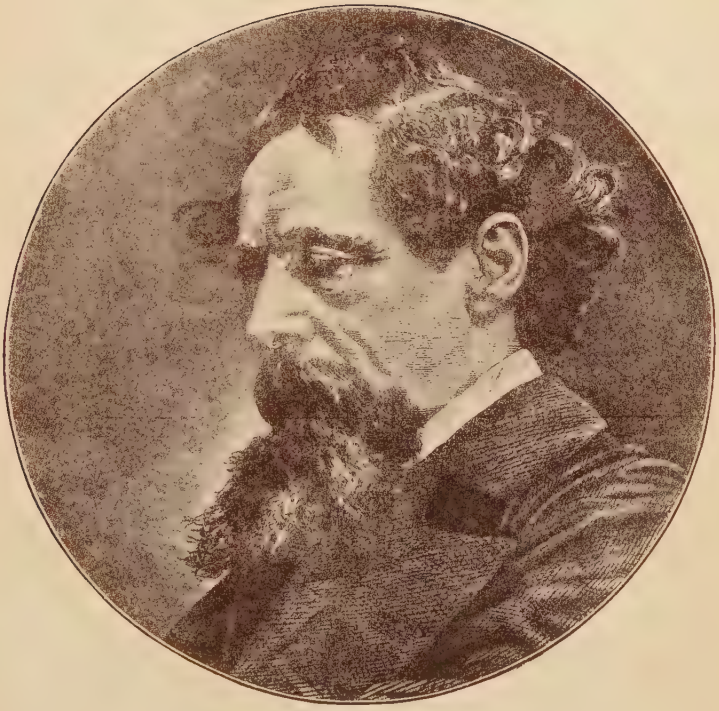
Hence, from general, special, as well, no doubt, for the usual prudential and benevolent considerations, there came to be established among railway officers and servants, nine years ago, the Railway Benevolent Association. I may suppose, therefore, as it was established nine years ago, that this is the ninth occasion of publishing from this chair the banns between this institution and the public. Nevertheless, I feel bound individually to do my duty the same as if it had never been done before, and to ask whether there is any just cause or impediment why these two parties—the institution and the public—should not be joined together in holy charity. As I understand the society, its objects are five-fold—first, to guarantee annuities, which, it is always to be observed, are paid out of the interest of invested capital, so that those annuities may be secure and safe—annual pensions, varying from £10 to £25, to distressed railway officers and servants incapacitated by age, sickness, or accident; secondly, to guarantee small pensions to distressed widows; thirdly, to educate and maintain orphan children; fourthly, to provide temporary relief for all those classes till lasting relief can be guaranteed out of funds sufficiently large for the purpose; lastly, to induce railway officers and servants to assure their lives in some well-established office by subdividing the payment of the premiums into small periodical sums, and also by granting a revisionary bonus of £10 per cent. on the amount assured from the funds of the institution.

This is the society we are met to assist—simple, sympathetic, practical, easy, sensible, unpretending. The number of its members is large, and rapidly on the increase: they number 12,000; the amount of invested capital is very nearly £15,000; it has done a world of good and a world of work in these first nine years of its life; and yet I am proud to say that the annual cost of the maintenance of the institution is no more than £250. And now if you do not know all about it in a small compass, either I do not know all about it myself or the fault must be in my "packing."

One naturally passes from what the institution is and has done, to what it wants. Well, it wants to do more good, and it cannot possibly do more good until it has

more money. It cannot safely, and therefore it cannot honourably, grant more pensions to deserving applicants until it grows richer, and it cannot grow rich enough for its laudable purpose by its own unaided self. The thing is absolutely impossible. The means of these railway officers and servants are far too limited. Even if they were helped to the utmost by the great railway companies, their means would still be too limited; even if they were helped—and I hope they shortly will be—by some of the great corporations of this country, whom railways have done so much to enrich. These railway officers and servants, on their road to a very humble and modest superannuation, can no more do without the help of the great public, than the great public, on their road from Torquay to Aberdeen, can do without them. Therefore, I desire to ask the public whether the servants of the great railways—who, in fact, are their servants, their ready, zealous, faithful, hard-working servants—whether they have not established, whether they do not every day establish, a reasonable claim to liberal remembrance.

Now, gentlemen, on this point of the case there is a story, once told me by a friend of mine, which seems to my mind to have a certain application. My friend was an American sea-captain, and therefore it is quite unnecessary to say his story was quite true. He was captain and part owner of a large American merchant liner. On a certain voyage out, in exquisite summer weather, he had for cabin passengers one beautiful young lady, and ten more or less beautiful young gentlemen. Light winds or dead calms prevailing, the voyage was slow. They had made half their distance when the ten young gentlemen were all madly in love with the beautiful young lady. They had all proposed to her, and bloodshed among the rivals seemed imminent pending the young lady's decision. On this extremity the beautiful young lady confided in my friend the captain, who gave her discreet advice. He said: "If your affections are disengaged, take that one of the young gentlemen whom you like the best and settle the question." To this the beautiful young lady made reply: "I cannot do that, because I like them all equally well." My friend, who was a man of resource, hit upon this ingenious expedient. Said he, "To-morrow morning at mid-day, when lunch is an-



CHARLES DICKENS
At forty-nine.

After a woodcut from a photograph.

nounced, do you plunge bodily overboard, head foremost. I will be alongside in a boat to rescue you, and take the one of the ten who rushes to your rescue, and then you can afterwards have him." The beautiful young lady highly approved, and did accordingly. But after she plunged in, nine out of the ten more or less beautiful young gentlemen plunged in after her; and the tenth remained and shed tears, looking over the side of the vessel. They were all picked up and restored dripping to the deck. The beautiful young lady upon seeing them said, "What am I to do? See what a plight they are in. How can I possibly choose, because every one of them is equally wet?" Then, said my friend the captain, acting upon a sudden inspiration, "Take the dry one." I am sorry to say that she did so, and they lived happy ever afterwards.

Now, gentlemen, in my application of this story, I exactly reverse my friend the captain's anecdote, and I entreat the public in looking about to consider who are fit subjects for their bounty, to give each his hand with something in it, and not to award a dry hand to the industrious railway servant who is always at his back. And I would ask any one with a doubt upon this subject to consider what his experience of the railway servant is from the time of his departure to his arrival at his destination. I know what mine is. Here he is, in velveteen or in a policeman's dress, scaling cabs, storming carriages, finding lost articles by a sort of instinct, binding up lost umbrellas and walking sticks, wheeling trucks, counselling old ladies, with a wonderful interest in their affairs—mostly very complicated—and sticking labels upon all sorts of articles. I look around—there he is, in a station-master's uniform, directing and overseeing, with the head of a general, and with the courteous manners of a gentleman; and then there is the handsome figure of the guard, who inspires confidence in timid passengers. I glide out of the station, and there he is again with his flags in his hand at his post in the open country, at the level crossing, at the cutting, at the tunnel mouth, and at every station on the road until our destination is reached. In regard, therefore, to the railway servants with whom we do come into contact, we may surely have some natural sympathy, and it is on their behalf that I this night appeal to you.

I beg now to propose "Success to the Railway Benevolent Society."

XXV.

London, *November* 2, 1867.

[On Saturday evening, November 2, 1867, a grand complimentary farewell dinner was given to Mr. Dickens at the Freemasons' Tavern on the occasion of his revisiting the United States of America. Lord Lytton officiated as Chairman, and proposed as a toast—"A Prosperous Voyage, Health, and Long Life to our Illustrious Guest and Countryman, Charles Dickens." The toast was drunk with all the honours, and one cheer more. Mr. Dickens then rose, and spoke as follows:]

My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen—No thanks that I can offer you can express my sense of my reception by this great assemblage, or can in the least suggest to you how deep the glowing words of my friend the chairman, and your acceptance of them, have sunk into my heart. But both combined have so greatly shaken the composure I am used to command in the presence of an audience, that I hope you may observe in me some traces of an eloquence more expressive than the richest words. To say that I am fervently grateful to you is to say nothing; to say that I can never forget this beautiful sight, is to say nothing; to say that it brings upon me a rush of emotion not only in its present pride and honour, but in the thoughts of its remembrance in the future by those who are dearest to me, is to say nothing; but to feel all this for the moment, even almost to pain, is very much indeed. Mercutio says of the wound in his breast, dealt him by the hand of a foe, that: "'Tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve." I may say of the wound in my breast, newly dealt to me by the hands of my friends, that it is deeper than the soundless sea, and wider than the whole Catholic Church. And I may safely add that it has for the moment almost stricken me dumb. I should be more than human, and I assure you I am very human indeed, if I could look around upon this brilliant representative company and not feel greatly thrilled and stirred by the presence of so many of my brother artists, not only in literature, but also in the sister arts, especially painting, among whose professors living and unhappily dead, are

many of my oldest and best friends. I hope that I may, without presumption, regard this thronging of my brothers around me as a testimony on their part that they believe that the cause of art generally has been safe in my keeping, and that they think it has never been falsely dealt with by me. Your resounding cheers just now would have been but so many cruel reproaches to me if I could not here declare that, from the earliest days of my career down to this proud night, I have always tried to be true to my calling. Never unduly to assert it, on the one hand, and never, on any pretence or consideration, to permit it to be patronised in my person, on the other, has been the steady endeavour of my life; and I have occasionally been vain enough to hope that I may leave its social position in England something better than I found it. Similarly, and equally I hope without presumption, I trust that I may take this general representation of the public here, through so many orders, pursuits, and degrees, as a token that the public believe that, with a host of imperfections and shortcomings upon my head, I have as a writer, in my soul and conscience, tried to be as true to them as they have ever been true to me. And here, in reference to the inner circle of the arts and the outer circle of the public, I feel it a duty to-night to offer two remarks. I have in my day at odd times heard a great deal about literary sets and cliques, and coteries and barriers; about keeping this man up, and keeping that man down; about sworn disciples and sworn unbelievers, and mutual admiration societies, and I know not what other dragons in the upward path. I began to tread it when I was very young, without influence, without money, without companion, introducer, or adviser, and I am bound to put in evidence in this place that I have never lighted on those dragons yet. So have I heard in my day, at divers other odd times, much generally to the effect that the English people have little or no love of art for its own sake, and that they do not greatly care to acknowledge or do honour to the artist. My own experience has uniformly been exactly the reverse. I can say that of my countrymen, although I cannot say that of my country.

And now passing to the immediate occasion of your doing me this great honour, the story of my going again

to America is very easily and briefly told. Since I was there before a vast and entirely new generation has arisen in the United States. Since I was there before most of the best known of my books have been written and published. The new generation and the books have come together and have kept together, until at length numbers of those who have so widely and constantly read me, naturally desiring a little variety in the relations between us, have expressed a strong wish that I should read myself. This wish, at first conveyed to me through public channels and business channels, has gradually become enforced by an immense accumulation of letters from individuals and associations of individuals, all expressing in the same hearty, homely, cordial, unaffected way, a kind of personal interest in me—I had almost said a kind of personal affection for me, which I am sure you would agree with me it would be dull insensibility on my part not to prize. Little by little this pressure has become so great that, although as Charles Lamb says, my household gods strike a terribly deep root, I have torn them from their places, and this day week, at this hour, shall be upon the sea. You will readily conceive that I am inspired besides by a natural desire to see for myself the astonishing change and progress of a quarter of a century over there, to grasp the hands of many faithful friends whom I left upon those shores, to see the faces of a multitude of new friends upon whom I have never looked, and last, not least, to use my best endeavour to lay down a third cable of intercommunication and alliance between the old world and the new. Twelve years ago, when Heaven knows I little thought I should ever be bound upon the voyage which now lies before me, I wrote in that form of my writings which obtains by far the most extensive circulation, these words of the American nation: "I know full well, whatever little motes my beamy eyes may have descried in theirs, that they are a kind, large-hearted, generous, and great people." In that faith I am going to see them again; in that faith I shall, please God, return from them in the spring; in that same faith to live and to die. I told you in the beginning that I could not thank you enough, and Heaven knows I have most thoroughly kept my word. If I may quote one other short sentence from myself, let it imply all that I have left unsaid, and yet most deeply

feel. Let it, putting a girdle round the earth, comprehend both sides of the Atlantic at once in this moment, and so, as Tiny Tim observed, "God bless us every one."

XXVI.

Boston, *April* 8, 1868.

[Mr. Dickens gave his last Reading at Boston, on the above date. On his entrance a surprise awaited him. His reading-stand had been decorated with flowers and palm-leaves by some of the ladies of the city. He acknowledged this graceful tribute in the following words:—"Before allowing Dr. Marigold to tell his story in his own peculiar way, I kiss the kind, fair hands unknown which have so beautifully decorated my table this evening." After the Reading, Mr. Dickens attempted in vain to retire Persistent hands demanded "one word more." Returning to his desk, pale, with a tear in his eye, that found its way to his voice, he spoke as follows:]

Ladies and Gentlemen—My gracious and generous welcome in America, which can never be obliterated from my remembrance, began here. My departure begins here, too; for I assure you that I have never until this moment really felt that I am going away. In this brief life of ours, it is sad to do almost anything for the last time, and I cannot conceal from you, although my face will so soon be turned towards my native land, and to all that makes it dear, that it is a sad consideration with me that in a very few moments from this time, this brilliant hall and all that it contains, will fade from my view—for evermore. But it is my consolation that the spirit of the bright faces, the quick perception, the ready response, the generous and the cheering sounds that have made this place delightful to me, will remain; and you may rely upon it that that spirit will abide with me as long as I have sense and sentiment left.

I do not say this with any limited reference to private friendships that have for years upon years made Boston a memorable and beloved spot to me, for such private references have no business in this public place. I say it purely in remembrance of, and in homage to, the great public heart before me.

Ladies and gentlemen, I beg most earnestly, most gratefully, and most affectionately, to bid you, each and all, farewell.

XXVII.

New York, *April* 18, 1868.

[On the above date Mr. Dickens was entertained at a farewell dinner at Delmonico's Hotel, previous to his return to England. Two hundred gentlemen sat down to it, Mr. Horace Greeley presiding. In acknowledgment of the toast of his health, proposed by the chairman, Mr. Dickens rose and said:]

Gentlemen—I cannot do better than take my cue from your distinguished president, and refer in my first remarks to his remarks in connection with the old, natural association between you and me. When I received an invitation from a private association of working members of the press of New York to dine with them to-day, I accepted that compliment in grateful remembrance of a calling that was once my own, and in loyal sympathy towards a brotherhood which, in the spirit, I have never quitted. To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work, when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first successes; and my sons will hereafter testify of their father that he was always steadily proud of that ladder by which he rose. If it were otherwise, I should have but a very poor opinion of their father, which, perhaps, upon the whole, I have not. Hence, gentlemen, under any circumstances, this company would have been exceptionally interesting and gratifying to me. But whereas I supposed that, like the fairies' pavilion in the "Arabian Nights," it would be but a mere handful, and I find it turn out, like the same elastic pavilion, capable of comprehending a multitude, so much the more proud am I of the honour of being your guest; for you will readily believe that the more widely representative of the press in America my entertainers are, the more I must feel the good will and the kindly sentiments towards me of that vast institution.

Gentlemen, so much of my voice has lately been heard in the land, and I have for upwards of four hard winter months so contended against what I have been sometimes quite admiringly assured was "a true American catarrh"—a possession which I have throughout highly appreciated, though I might have preferred to be naturalised by any other outward and visible signs—I say, gentlemen, so much

of my voice has lately been heard, that I might have been contented with troubling you no further from my present standing-point, were it not a duty with which I henceforth charge myself, not only here but on every suitable occasion whatsoever and wheresoever, to express my high and grateful sense of my second reception in America, and to bear my honest testimony to the national generosity and magnanimity. Also, to declare how astounded I have been by the amazing changes that I have seen around me on every side—changes moral, changes physical, changes in the amount of land subdued and peopled, changes in the rise of vast new cities, changes in the growth of older cities almost out of recognition, changes in the graces and amenities of life, changes in the press, without whose advancement no advancement can be made anywhere. Nor am I, believe me, so arrogant as to suppose that in five-and-twenty years there have been no changes in me, and that I had nothing to learn and no extreme impressions to correct when I was here first.

And, gentlemen, this brings me to a point on which I have, ever sense I landed here last November, observed a strict silence, though tempted sometimes to break it, but in reference to which I will, with your good leave, take you into my confidence now. Even the press, being human, may be sometimes mistaken or misinformed, and I rather think that I have in one or two rare instances known its information to be not perfectly accurate with reference to myself. Indeed, I have now and again been more surprised by printed news that I have read of myself than by any printed news that I have ever read in my present state of existence. Thus, the vigour and perseverance with which I have for some months past been collecting materials for and hammering away at a new book on America have much astonished me, seeing that all that time it has been perfectly well known to my publishers on both sides of the Atlantic that I positively declared that no consideration on earth should induce me to write one. But what I have intended, what I have resolved upon (and this is the confidence I seek to place in you), is, on my return to England, in my own person, to bear, for the behoof of my countrymen, such testimony to the gigantic changes in this country as I have hinted

at to-night. Also, to record that wherever I have been, in the smallest places equally with the largest, I have been received with unsurpassable politeness, delicacy, sweet temper, hospitality, consideration, and with unsurpassable respect for the privacy daily enforced upon me by the nature of my avocation here, and the state of my health. This testimony, so long as I live, and so long as my descendants have any legal right in my books, I shall cause to be republished, as an appendix to every copy of those two books of mine in which I have referred to America. And this I will do and cause to be done, not in mere love and thankfulness, but because I regard it as an act of plain justice and honour.

Gentlemen, the transition from my own feelings towards and interest in America to those of the mass of my countrymen seems to be a natural one; but, whether or no, I make it with an express object. I was asked in this very city, about last Christmas time, whether an American was not at some disadvantage in England as a foreigner. The notion of an American being regarded in England as a foreigner at all, of his ever being thought of or spoken of in that character, was so uncommonly incongruous and absurd to me, that my gravity was, for the moment, quite overpowered. As soon as it was restored, I said that for years and years past I hoped I had had as many American friends and had received as many American visitors as almost any Englishman living, and that my unvarying experience, fortified by theirs, was that it was enough in England to be an American to be received with the readiest respect and recognition anywhere. Hereupon, out of half a dozen people, suddenly spoke out two, one an American gentleman, with a cultivated taste for art, who, finding himself on a certain Sunday outside the walls of a certain historical English castle, famous for its pictures, was refused admission there, according to the strict rules of the establishment on that day, but who, on merely representing that he was an American gentleman, on his travels, had, not to say the picture gallery, but the whole castle, placed at his immediate disposal. The other was a lady, who, being in London, and having a great desire to see the famous reading-room of the British Museum, was assured by the English family with whom she stayed that it was unfortunately impossible, because the place

was closed for a week, and she had only three days there. Upon that lady's going to the Museum, as she assured me, alone to the gate, self-introduced as an American lady, the gate flew open, as it were, magically. I am unwillingly bound to add that she certainly was young and exceedingly pretty. Still, the porter of that institution is of an obese habit, and, according to the best of my observation of him, not very impressible.

Now, gentlemen, I refer to these trifles as a collateral assurance to you that the Englishman who shall humbly strive, as I hope to do, to be in England as faithful to America as to England herself, has no previous conceptions to contend against. Points of difference there have been, points of difference there are, points of difference there probably always will be between the two great peoples. But broadcast in England is sown the sentiment that those two peoples are essentially one, and that it rests with them jointly to uphold the great Anglo-Saxon race, to which our president has referred, and all its great achievements before the world. And if I know anything of my countrymen—and they give me credit for knowing something—if I know anything of my countrymen, gentlemen, the English heart is stirred by the fluttering of those Stars and Stripes, as it is stirred by no other flag that flies except its own. If I know my countrymen, in any and every relation towards America, they begin, not as Sir Anthony Absolute recommended that lovers should begin, with "a little aversion," but with a great liking and a profound respect; and whatever the little sensitiveness of the moment, or the little official passion, or the little official policy now, or then, or here, or there, may be, take my word for it, that the first enduring, great, popular consideration in England is a generous construction of justice.

Finally, gentlemen, and I say this subject to your correction, I do believe that from the great majority of honest minds on both sides, there cannot be absent the conviction that it would be better for this globe to be riven by an earthquake, fired by a comet, overrun by an iceberg, and abandoned to the Arctic fox and bear, than that it should present the spectacle of these two great nations, each of which has, in its own way and hour, striven so hard

and so successfully for freedom, ever again being arrayed the one against the other. Gentlemen, I cannot thank your president enough or you enough for your kind reception of my health, and of my poor remarks, but, believe me, I do thank you with the utmost fervour of which my soul is capable.

XXVIII.

New York, *April* 20, 1868.

[Mr. Dickens's last Reading in the United States was given at the Steinway Hall on the above date. The task finished, he was about to retire, but a tremendous burst of applause stopped him. He came forward and spoke thus:]

Ladies and Gentlemen—The shadow of one word has impended over me this evening, and the time has come at length when the shadow must fall. It is but a very short one, but the weight of such things is not measured by their length, and two much shorter words express the round of our human existence. When I was reading "David Copperfield" a few evenings since, I felt there was more than usual significance in the words of Peggotty, "My future life lies over the sea." And when I closed this book just now, I felt most keenly that I was shortly to establish such an *alibi* as would have satisfied even the elder Mr. Weller. The relations which have been set up between us, while they have evolved for me something more than mere devotion to a task, have been by you sustained with the readiest sympathy and the kindest acknowledgment.

Those relations must now be broken for ever. Be assured, however, that you will not pass from my mind. I shall often realise you as I see you now, equally by my winter fire and in the green English summer weather. I shall never recall you as a mere public audience, but rather as a host of personal friends, and ever with the greatest gratitude, tenderness and consideration. Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to bid you farewell. God bless you, and God bless the land in which I leave you.

XXIX.

Liverpool, *April* 10, 1869.

[The following speech was delivered by Mr. Dickens at a Banquet held in his honour at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, after his health had been proposed by Lord Dufferin:]

Mr. Mayor, Ladies, and Gentlemen—Although I have been so well accustomed of late to the sound of my own voice in this neighbourhood, as to hear it with perfect composure, the occasion is, believe me, very, very different in respect of those overwhelming voices of yours. As Professor Wilson once confided to me in Edinburgh that I had not the least idea, from hearing him in public, what a magnificent speaker he found himself to be when he was quite alone—so you can form no conception, from the specimen before you, of the eloquence with which I shall thank you again and again in some of the innermost moments of my future life. Often and often, then, God willing, my memory will recall this brilliant scene, and will re-illuminate this banquet-hall. I, faithful to this place in its present aspect, will observe it exactly as it stands—not one man's seat empty, not one woman's fair face absent, while life and memory abide by me.

Mr. Mayor, Lord Dufferin in his speech so affecting to me, so eloquently uttered, and so rapturously received, made a graceful and gracious allusion to the immediate occasion of my present visit to your noble city. It is no homage to Liverpool, based upon a moment's untrustworthy enthusiasm, but it is the solid fact built upon the rock of experience, that when I first made up my mind, after considerable deliberation systematically to meet my readers in large numbers, face to face, and to try to express myself to them through the breath of life, Liverpool stood foremost among the great places out of London to which I looked with eager confidence and pleasure. And why was this? Not merely because of the reputation of its citizens for generous estimation of the arts; not merely because I had unworthily filled the chair of its great self-educational institution long ago; not merely because the place had been a home to me since the well-remembered day when its blessed roofs and steeples dipped into the Mersey behind me on the occasion of my first sail-

ing away to see my generous friends across the Atlantic twenty-seven years ago. Not for one of those considerations, but because it had been my happiness to have a public opportunity of testing the spirit of its people. I had asked Liverpool for help towards the worthy preservation of Shakespeare's house. On another occasion I had ventured to address Liverpool in the names of Leigh Hunt and Sheridan Knowles. On still another occasion I had addressed it in the cause of the brotherhood and sisterhood of letters and the kindred arts, and on each and all the response had been unsurpassably spontaneous, open-handed, and munificent.

Mr. Mayor, and ladies and gentlemen, if I may venture to take a small illustration of my present position from my own peculiar craft, I would say that there is this objection in writing fiction to giving a story in autobiographical form, that through whatever dangers the narrator may pass, it is clear unfortunately to the reader beforehand that he must have come through them somehow, else he could not have lived to tell the tale. Now, in speaking fact, when the fact is associated with such honours as those with which you have enriched me, there is this singular difficulty in the way of returning thanks, that the speaker must infallibly come back to himself through whatever oratorical disasters he may languish on the road. Let me, then, take the plainer and simpler middle course of dividing my subject equally between myself and you. Let me assure you that whatever you have accepted with pleasure, either by word of pen or by word of mouth, from me, you have greatly improved in the acceptance. As the gold is said to be doubly and trebly refined which has seven times passed the furnace, so a fancy may be said to become more and more refined each time it passes through the human heart. You have, and you know you have, brought to the consideration of me that quality in yourselves without which I should but have beaten the air. Your earnestness has stimulated mine, your laughter has made me laugh, and your tears have overflowed my eyes. All that I claim for myself in establishing the relations which exist between us is constant fidelity to hard work. My literary fellows about me, of whom I am so proud to see so many, know very well how true it is in all art that what seems the easiest

done is oftentimes the most difficult to do, and that the smallest truth may come of the greatest pains—much, as it occurred to me at Manchester the other day, as the sensitive touch of Mr. Whitworth's measuring machine, comes at last, of Heaven and Manchester and its mayor only know how much hammering—my companions-in-arms know thoroughly well, and I think it only right the public should know too, that in our careful toil and trouble, and in our steady striving for excellence—not in any little gifts, misused by fits and starts—lies our highest duty at once to our calling, to one another, to ourselves, and to you.

Ladies and gentlemen, before sitting down I find that I have to clear myself of two very unexpected accusations. The first is a most singular charge preferred against me by my old friend Lord Houghton, that I have been somewhat unconscious of the merits of the House of Lords. Now, ladies and gentlemen, seeing that I have had some few not altogether obscure or unknown personal friends in that assembly, seeing that I had some little association with, and knowledge of, a certain obscure peer lately known in England by the name of Lord Brougham; seeing that I regard with some admiration and affection another obscure peer wholly unknown in literary circles, called Lord Lytton; seeing also that I have had for some years some slight admiration of the extraordinary judicial properties and amazingly acute mind of a certain Lord Chief Justice popularly known by the name of Cockburn; and also seeing that there is no man in England whom I respect more in his public capacity, whom I love more in his private capacity, or from whom I have received more remarkable proofs of his honour and love of literature than another obscure nobleman called Lord Russell; taking these circumstances into consideration, I was rather amazed by my noble friend's accusation. When I asked him, on his sitting down, what amazing devil possessed him to make this charge, he replied that he had never forgotten the days of Lord Verisopht. Then, ladies and gentlemen, I understood it all. Because it is a remarkable fact that in the days when that depreciative and profoundly unnatural character was invented there was no Lord Houghton in the House of Lords. And there was in the House of Commons a rather indifferent member called Richard Monckton Milnes.

Ladies and gentlemen, to conclude, for the present, I close with the other charge of my noble friend, and here I am more serious, and I may be allowed perhaps to express my seriousness in half a dozen plain words. When I first took literature as my profession in England, I calmly resolved within myself that, whether I succeeded or whether I failed, literature should be my sole profession. It appeared to me at that time that it was not so well understood in England as it was in other foreign countries that literature was a dignified profession, by which any man might stand or fall. I made a compact with myself that in my person literature should stand, and by itself, of itself, and for itself; and there is no consideration on earth which would induce me to break that bargain.

Ladies and gentlemen, finally allow me to thank you for your great kindness, and for the touching earnestness with which you have drunk my health. I should have thanked you with all my heart if it had not so unfortunately happened that, for many sufficient reasons, I lost my heart as between half-past six and half-past seven to-night.

XXX.

THE OXFORD AND HARVARD BOAT RACE.

SYDENHAM, *August* 30, 1869.

[The International University Boat Race having taken place on August 27, the London Rowing Club invited the Crews to a Dinner at the Crystal Palace on the following Monday. The dinner was followed by a grand display of pyrotechnics. Mr. Dickens, in proposing the health of the Crews, made the following speech:]

GENTLEMEN—Flushed with fireworks, I can warrant myself to you as about to imitate those gorgeous illusions by making a brief spirt and then dying out. And, first of all, as an invited visitor of the London Rowing Club on this most interesting occasion, I will beg, in the name of the other invited visitors present—always excepting the distinguished guests who are the cause of our meeting—to thank the president for the modesty and the courtesy

with which he has deputed to one of us the most agreeable part of this evening's duty. It is the more graceful in him to do this because he can hardly fail to see that he might very easily do it himself, as this is a case of all others in which it is according to good taste and the very principles of things that the great social vice, speech-making, should hide its diminished head before the great social virtue action. However there is an ancient story of a lady who threw her glove into the arena full of wild beasts to tempt her attendant lover to climb down and reclaim it. The lover, rightly inferring from the action the worth of the lady, risked his life for the glove, and then threw it lightly in her face as a token of his eternal adieu.* I take up the president's glove, on the contrary, as a proof of his much higher worth, and of my real interest in the cause in which it was thrown down, and I now profess my readiness to do even injustice to the duty which he has assigned me.

Gentlemen, a very remarkable and affecting volume was published in the United States within a short time before my last visit to that hospitable land, containing ninety-five biographies of young men, for the most part well-born and well-nurtured, and trained in various peaceful pursuits of life, who, when the flag of their country waved them from those quiet paths in which they were seeking distinction of various kinds, took arms in the dread civil war which elicited so much bravery on both sides, and died in defense of their country. These great spirits displayed extraordinary aptitude in the acquisition, even in the invention, of military tactics, in the combining and commanding of great masses of men, in surprising readiness of self-resource for the general good, in humanely treating the sick and the wounded, and in winning to themselves a very rare amount of personal confidence and trust. They had all risen to be distinguished soldiers; they had all done deeds of great heroism; they had all combined with their valour and self-devotion a serene cheerfulness, a quiet modesty, and a truly Christian spirit; and they had all been educated in one school—Harvard University.

Gentlemen, nothing was more remarkable in these fine

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*Robert Browning: "Bells and Pomegranates."

descendants of our forefathers than the invincible determination with which they fought against odds, and the undauntable spirit with which they resisted defeat. I ask you, who will say after last Friday that Harvard University is less true to herself in peace than she was in war. I ask you, who will not recognise in her boat's crew the leaven of her soldiers, and who does not feel that she has now a greater right than ever to be proud of her sons, and take these sons to her breast when they return with resounding acclamations? It is related of the Duke of Wellington that he once told a lady who foolishly protested that she would like to see a great victory that there was only one thing worse than a great victory, and that was a great defeat.

But, gentlemen, there is another sense in which to use the term a great defeat. Such is the defeat of a handful of daring fellows who make a preliminary dash of three or four thousand stormy miles to meet great conquerors on their own domain—who do not want the stimulus of friends and home, but who sufficiently hear and feel their own dear land in the shouts and cheers of another—and who strive to the last with a desperate tenacity that makes the beating of them a new feather in the proudest cap. Gentlemen, you agree with me that such a defeat is a great, noble part of a manly, wholesome action; and I say that it is in the essence and life-blood of such a defeat to become at last sure victory.

Now, gentlemen, you know perfectly well the toast I am going to propose, and you know equally well that in thus glancing first towards our friends of the white stripes, I merely anticipate and respond to the instinctive courtesy of Oxford towards our brothers from a distance—a courtesy extending, I hope, and I do not doubt, to any imaginable limits except allowing them to take the first place in last Friday's match, if they could by any human and honourable means be kept in the second. I will not avail myself of the opportunity provided for me by the absence of the greater part of the Oxford crew—indeed, of all but one, and that its most modest and devoted member—I will not avail myself of the golden opportunity considerately provided for me to say a great deal in honour of the Oxford crew. I know that the gentleman who attends here attends under unusual anxieties and diffi-

culties, and that if he were less in earnest his filial affection could not possibly allow him to be here.

It is therefore enough for me, gentlemen, and enough for you, that I should say here, and now, that we all unite with one accord in regarding the Oxford crew as the pride and flower of England—and that we should consider it very weak indeed to set anything short of England's very best in opposition to or competition with America; though it certainly must be confessed—I am bound in common justice and honour to admit it—it must be confessed a disparagement of the Oxford men, as I heard a discontented gentleman remark last Friday night, about ten o'clock, when he was baiting a very small horse in the Strand—he was one of eleven with pipes in a chaise cart—I say it must be admitted in disparagement of the Oxford men on the authority of this gentleman, that they have won so often that they could afford to lose a little now, and that "they ought to do it, but they won't."

Gentlemen, in drinking to both crews, and in offering the poor testimony of our thanks in acknowledgment of the gallant spectacle which they presented to countless thousands last Friday, I am sure I express not only your feeling, and my feeling, and the feeling of the Blue, but also the feeling of the whole people of England, when I cordially give them welcome to our English waters and English ground, and also bid them "God speed" in their voyage home. As the greater includes the less, and the sea holds the river, so I think it is no very bold augury to predict that in the friendly contests yet to come and to take place, I hope, on both sides of the Atlantic—there are great river triumphs for Harvard University yet in store. Gentlemen, I warn the English portion of this audience that these are very dangerous men. Remember that it was an undergraduate of Harvard University who served as a common seaman two years before the mast,* and who wrote about the best sea book in the English tongue. Remember that it was one of those young American gentlemen who sailed his mite of a yacht across the Atlantic in mid-winter, and who sailed in her to sink or swim with the men who believed in him.

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*R. H. Dana.

And now, gentlemen, in conclusion, animated by your cordial acquiescence, I will take upon myself to assure our brothers from a distance that the utmost enthusiasm with which they can be received on their return home will find a ready echo in every corner of England—and further, that none of their immediate countrymen—I use the qualifying term immediate, for we are, as our president said, fellow-countrymen, thank God—that none of their compatriots who saw, or who will read of, what they did in this great race, can be more thoroughly imbued with a sense of their indomitable courage and their high deserts than are their rivals and their hosts to-night. Gentlemen, I beg to propose to you to drink the crews of Harvard and Oxford University, and I beg to couple with that toast the names of Mr. Simmons and Mr. Willan.

XXXI.

BIRMINGHAM, *September* 27, 1869.

[Inaugural Address on the opening of the Winter Session of the Birmingham and Midland Institute.

One who was present during the delivery of the following speech informs the editor that "no note of any kind was referred to by Mr. Dickens—except the quotation from Sydney Smith. The address, evidently carefully prepared, was delivered without a single pause, in Mr. Dickens's best manner, and was a very great success."]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—We often hear of our common country that it is an over-populated one, that it is an over-pauperised one, that it is an over-colonising one, and that it is an over-taxed one, Now I, entertain, especially of late times, the heretical belief that it is an over-talked one, and that there is a deal of public speech-making going about in various directions which might be advantageously dispensed with. If I were free to act upon this conviction, as president for the time being of the great institution so numerously represented here, I should immediately and at once subside into a golden silence, which would be of a highly edifying, because of a very exemplary character. But I happen to be the institution's willing servant, not its imperious master, and it exacts tribute of mere silver or copper speech—not to say brazen—from whomsoever it exalts to my high office. Some African tribes—not to draw the comparison dis-

respectfully—some savage African tribes, when they make a king require him perhaps to achieve an exhausting foot-race under the stimulus of considerable popular prodding and goading, or perhaps to be severely and experimentally knocked about the head by his Privy Council, or perhaps to be dipped in a river full of crocodiles, or perhaps to drink immense quantities of something nasty out of a calabash—at all events to undergo some purifying ordeal in presence of his admiring subjects.

I must confess that I became rather alarmed when I was duly warned by your constituted authorities that whatever I might happen to say here to-night would be termed an inaugural address on the entrance upon a new term of study by the members of your various classes; for, besides that the phrase is something high-sounding for my taste, I avow that I do look forward to that blessed time when every man shall inaugurate his own work for himself, and do it. I believe that we shall then have inaugurated a new era indeed, and one in which the Lord's Prayer will become a fulfilled prophecy upon this earth. Remembering, however, that you may call anything by any name without in the least changing its nature—bethinking myself that you may, if you be so minded, call a butterfly a buffalo, without advancing a hair's breadth towards making it one—I became composed in my mind, and resolved to stick to the very homely intention I had previously formed. This was merely to tell you, the members, students, and friends of the Birmingham and Midland Institute—firstly, what you cannot possibly want to know, (this is a very popular oratorical theme); secondly, what your institution has done; and, thirdly, what, in the poor opinion of its president for the time being, remains for it to do and not to do.

Now, first, as to what you cannot possibly want to know. You cannot need from me any oratorical declamation concerning the abstract advantages of knowledge or the beauties of self-improvement. If you had any such requirement you would not be here. I conceive that you are here because you have become thoroughly penetrated with such principles, either in your own persons or in the persons of some striving fellow-creatures, on whom you have looked with interest and sympathy. I conceive that you are here because you feel the welfare

of the great chiefly adult educational establishment, whose doors stand really open to all sorts and conditions of people, to be inseparable from the best welfare of your great town and its neighbourhood. Nay, if I take a much wider range than that, and say that we all—every one of us here—perfectly well know that the benefits of such an establishment must extend far beyond the limits of this midland county—its fires and smoke—and must comprehend, in some sort, the whole community, I do not strain the truth. It was suggested by Mr. Babbage, in his "Ninth Bridgewater Treatise," that a mere spoken word—a single articulated syllable thrown into the air—may go on reverberating through illimitable space for ever and for ever, seeing that there is no rim against which it can strike—no boundary at which it can possibly arrive. Similarly it may be said—not as an ingenious speculation, but as a steadfast and absolute fact—that human calculation cannot limit the influence of one atom of wholesome knowledge patiently acquired, modestly possessed, and faithfully used.

As the astronomers tell us that it is probable that there are in the universe innumerable solar systems besides ours, to each or which myriads of utterly unknown and unseen stars belong, so it is certain that every man, however obscure, however far removed from the general recognition, is one of a group of men impressible for good, and impressible for evil, and that it is in the eternal nature of things that he cannot really improve himself without in some degree improving other men. And observe this is especially the case when he has improved himself in the teeth of adverse circumstances, as in a maturity succeeding to a neglected or an ill-taught youth, in the few daily hours remaining to him after ten or twelve hours' labour, in the few pauses and intervals of a life of toil; for then his fellows and companions have assurance that he can have known no favouring conditions, and that they can do what he has done, in wresting some enlightenment and self-respect from what Lord Lytton finely calls:

> Those twin gaolers of the daring heart,
> Low birth and iron fortune.

As you have proved these truths in your own experience

or in your own observation, and as it may be safely assumed that there can be very few persons in Birmingham, of all places under heaven, who would contest the position that the more cultivated the employed the better for the employer, and the more cultivated the employer the better for the employed; therefore, my references to what you do not want to know shall here cease and determine.

Next, with reference to what your institution has done; on my summary, which shall be as concise and as correct as my information and my remembrance of it may render possible, I desire to lay emphatic stress. Your institution, sixteen years old, and in which masters and workmen study together, has outgrown the ample edifice in which it receives 2,500 or 2,600 members and students. It is a most cheering sign of its vigorous vitality that of its industrial students almost half are artisans in the receipt of weekly wages. I think I am correct in saying that 400 others are clerks, apprentices, tradesmen, or tradesmen's sons. I note with particular pleasure the adherence of a goodly number of the gentler sex, without whom no institution whatever can truly claim to be either a civilising or a civilised one. The increased attendance at your educational classes is always greatest on the part of the artisans—the class within my experience the least reached in any similar institutions elsewhere, and whose name is the oftenest and the most constantly taken in vain. But it is specially reached here, not improbably because it is, as it should be, specially addressed in the foundation of the industrial department, in the allotment of the direction of the society's affairs, and in the establishment of what are called its penny classes—a bold, and, I am happy to say, a triumphantly successful experiment, which enables the artisan to obtain sound evening instruction in subjects directly bearing upon his daily usefulness or on his daily happiness, as arithmetic (elementary and advanced), chemistry, physical geography, and singing, on payment of the astoundingly low fee of a single penny every time he attends the class. I beg emphatically to say that I look upon this as one of the most remarkable schemes ever devised for the educational behoof of the artisan, and if your institution had done nothing else in all its life, I would take my stand by it on its having done this.

Apart, however, from its industrial department, it has its general department, offering all the advantages of a first-class literary institution. It has its reading-rooms, its library, its chemical laboratory, its museum, its art department, its lecture hall, and its long list of lectures on subjects of various and comprehensive interest, delivered by lecturers of the highest qualifications. Very well. But it may be asked, what are the practical results of all these appliances? Now, let us suppose a few. Suppose that your institution should have educated those who are now its teachers. That would be a very remarkable fact. Supposing, besides, it should, so to speak, have educated education all around it, by sending forth numerous and efficient teachers into many and divers schools. Suppose the young student, reared exclusively in its laboratory, should be presently snapped up for the laboratory of the great and famous hospitals. Suppose that in nine years its industrial students should have carried off a round dozen of the much competed for prizes awarded by the Society of Arts and the Government department, besides two local prizes originating in the generosity of a Birmingham man. Suppose that the Town Council, having it in trust to find an artisan well fit to receive the Whitworth prizes, should find him here. Suppose that one of the industrial students should turn his chemical studies to the practical account of extracting gold from waste colour water, and of taking it into custody, in the very act of running away with hundreds of pounds down the town drains. Suppose another should perceive in his books, in his studious evenings, what was amiss with his master's until then inscrutably defective furnace, and should go straight—to the great annual saving of that master—and put it right. Supposing another should puzzle out the means, until then quite unknown in England, of making a certain description of coloured glass. Supposing another should qualify himself to vanquish one by one, as they daily arise, all the little difficulties incidental to his calling as an electro-plater, and should be applied to by his companions in the shop in all emergencies under the name of the "Encyclopædia." Suppose a long procession of such cases, and then consider that these are not suppositions at all, but are plain, unvarnished facts, culminating in the one special and significant fact that,

with a single solitary exception, every one of the institution's industrial students who have taken its prizes within ten years have since climbed to higher situations in their way of life.

As to the extent to which the institution encourages the artisan to think, and so, for instance, to rise superior to the little shackling prejudices and observances perchance existing in his trade when they will not bear the test of inquiry, that is only to be equalled by the extent to which it encourages him to feel. There is a certain tone of modest manliness pervading all the little facts which I have looked through which I found remarkably impressive. The decided objection on the part of industrial students to attend classes in their working clothes, breathes this tone, as being a graceful and at the same time perfectly independent recognition of the place and of one another. And this tone is admirably illustrated in a different way, in the case of a poor bricklayer, who, being in temporary reverses through the illness of his family, and having consequently been obliged to part with his best clothes, and being therefore missed from his classes, in which he had been noticed as a very hard worker, was persuaded to attend them in his working clothes. He replied, "No, it was not possible. It must not be thought of. It must not come into question for a moment. It would be supposed, or it might be thought, that he did it to attract attention." And the same man being offered by one of the officers a loan of money to enable him to rehabilitate his appearance, positively declined it, on the ground that he came to the institution to learn and to know better how to help himself, not otherwise to ask help, or to receive help from any man. Now, I am justified in calling this the tone of the institution, because it is no isolated instance, but is a fair and honourable sample of the spirit of the place, and as such I put it at the conclusion—though last certainly not least—of my references to what your institution has indubitably done.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I come at length to what, in the humble opinion of the evanescent officer before you, remains for the institution to do and not to do. As Mr. Carlyle has it towards the closing pages of his grand history of the French Revolution, "This we are now with due brevity to glance at; and then courage, oh listener, I see land!"

I earnestly hope—and I firmly believe—that your institution will do henceforth as it has done hitherto; it can hardly do better. I hope and believe that it will know among its members no distinction of persons, creed, or party, but that it will conserve its place of assemblage as a high, pure ground, on which all such considerations shall merge into the one universal, heaven-sent aspiration of the human soul to be wiser and better. I hope and believe that it will always be expansive and elastic; for ever seeking to devise new means of enlarging the circle of its members, of attracting to itself the confidence of still greater and greater numbers, and never evincing any more disposition to stand still than time does, or life does, or the seasons do. And above all things, I hope, and I feel confident from its antecedents, that it will never allow any consideration on the face of the earth to induce it to patronise or to be patronised, for, I verily believe that the bestowal and receipt of patronage in such wise has been a curse in England, and that it has done more to prevent really good objects, and to lower really high character, than the utmost efforts of the narrowest antagonism could have effected in twice the time.

I have no fear that the walls of the Birmingham and Midland Institute will ever tremble responsive to the croakings of the timid opponents of intellectual progress; but in this connection generally I cannot forbear from offering a remark which is much upon my mind. It is commonly assumed—much too commonly—that this age is a material age, and that a material age is an irreligious age. I have been pained lately to see this assumption repeated in certain influential quarters for which I have a high respect, and desire to have a higher. I am afraid that by dint of constantly being reiterated, and reiterated without protest, this assumption—which I take leave altogether to deny—may be accepted by the more unthinking part of the public as unquestionably true; just as caricaturists and painters professedly making a portrait of some public man, which was not in the least like him to begin with, have gone on repeating and repeating it until the public came to believe that it must be exactly like him, simply because it was like itself, and really have at last, in the fulness of time, grown almost disposed to resent upon him their tardy discovery—really to resent

upon him their late discovery—that he was not like it. I confess, standing here in this responsible situation, that I do not understand this much-used and much-abused phrase—the "material age." I cannot comprehend—if anybody can I very much doubt—its logical signification. For instance, has electricity become more material in the mind of any sane or moderately insane man, woman, or child, because of the discovery that in the good providence of God it could be made available for the service and use of man to an immeasurably greater extent than for his destruction? Do I make a more material journey to the bed-side of my dying parent or my dying child when I travel there at the rate of sixty miles an hour, than when I travel thither at the rate of six? Rather, in the swiftest case, does not my agonised heart become overfraught with gratitude to that Supreme Beneficence from whom alone could have proceeded the wonderful means of shortening my suspense? What is the materiality of the cable or the wire compared with the materiality of the spark? What is the materiality of certain chemical substances that we can weigh or measure, imprison or release, compared with the materiality of their appointed affinities and repulsions presented to them from the instant of their creation to the day of judgment? When did this so-called material age begin? With the use of clothing; with the discovery of the compass; with the invention of the art of printing? Surely, it has been a long time about; and which is the more material object, the farthing tallow candle that will not give me light, or that flame of gas which will?

No, ladies and gentlemen, do not let us be discouraged or deceived by any fine, vapid, empty words. The true material age is the stupid Chinese age, in which no new or grand revelations of nature are granted, because they are ignorantly and insolently repelled, instead of being diligently and humbly sought. The difference between the ancient fiction of the mad braggart defying the lightning and the modern historical picture of Franklin drawing it towards his kite, in order that he might the more profoundly study that which was set before him to be studied (or it would not have been there), happily expresses to my mind the distinction between the much-maligned material sages—material in one sense, I suppose, but in another

very immaterial sages—of the Celestial Empire school. Consider whether it is likely or unlikely, natural or unnatural, reasonable or unreasonable, that I, a being capable of thought, and finding myself surrounded by such discovered wonders on every hand, should sometimes ask myself the question—should put to myself the solemn consideration—can these things be among those things which might have been disclosed by divine lips nigh upon two thousand years ago, but that the people of that time could not bear them? And whether this be so or no, if I am so surrounded on every hand, is not my moral responsibility tremendously increased thereby, and with it my intelligence and submission as a child of Adam and of the dust, before that Shining Source which equally of all that is granted and all that is withheld holds in His mighty hands the unapproachable mysteries of life and death?

To the students of your industrial classes generally I have had it in my mind, first, to commend the short motto, in two words, "Courage—Persevere." This is the motto of a friend and worker. Not because the eyes of Europe are upon them, for I don't in the least believe it; nor because the eyes of even England are upon them, for I don't in the least believe it; not because their doings will be proclaimed with blast of trumpet at street corners, for no such musical performances will take place; not because self-improvement is at all certain to lead to worldly success, but simply because it is good and right of itself, and because, being so, it does assuredly bring with it its own resources and its own rewards. I would further commend to them a very wise and witty piece of advice on the conduct of the understanding which was given more than half a century ago by the Rev. Sydney Smith—wisest and wittiest of the friends I have lost. He says—and he is speaking, you will please understand, as I speak, to a school of volunteer students—he says: "There is a piece of foppery which is to be cautiously guarded against, the foppery of universality, of knowing all sciences and excelling in all arts—chemistry, mathematics, algebra, dancing, history, reasoning, riding, fencing, Low Dutch, High Dutch, and natural philosophy. In short, the modern precept of education very often is, 'Take the Admirable Crichton for your model, I would

have you ignorant of nothing.' Now," says he, "my advice, on the contrary, is to have the courage to be ignorant of a great number of things, in order that you may avoid the calamity of being ignorant of everything."

To this I would superadd a little truth, which holds equally good of my own life and the life of every eminent man I have ever known. The one serviceable, safe, certain, remunerative, attainable quality in every study and in every pursuit is the quality of attention. My own invention or imagination, such as it is, I can most truthfully assure you, would never have served me as it has, but for the habit of commonplace, humble, patient, daily, toiling, drudging attention. Genius, vivacity, quickness of penetration, brilliancy in association of ideas—such mental qualities, like the qualities of the apparition of the externally armed head in "Macbeth," will not be commanded; but attention after due term of submissive service always will. Like certain plants which the poorest peasant may grow in the poorest soil, it can be cultivated by any one, and it is certain in its own good season to bring forth flowers and fruit. I can most truthfully assure you, by the bye, that this eulogium on attention is so far quite disinterested on my part as that it has not the least reference whatever to the attention with which you have honoured me.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have done. I cannot but reflect how often you have probably heard within these walls one of the foremost men, and certainly one of the very best speakers, if not the very best, in England. I could not say to myself when I began just now, in Shakespeare's line—

I will be BRIGHT and shining gold—

but I could say to myself, and I did say to myself, "I will be as natural and easy as I possibly can," because my heart has all been in my subject, and I bear an old love towards Birmingham and Birmingham men. I have said that I bear an old love towards Birmingham and Birmingham men; let me amend a small omission, and add "and Birmingham women." This ring I wear on my finger now is an old Birmingham gift, and if by rubbing it I could raise the spirit that was obedient to Aladdin's ring,

I heartily assure you that my first instruction to that genius on the spot should be to place himself at Birmingham's disposal in the best of causes.

[In acknowledging the vote of thanks, Mr. Dickens said:]

Ladies and gentlemen, as I hope it is more than possible that I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again before Christmas is out, and shall have the great interest of seeing the faces and touching the hands of the successful competitors in your lists, I will not cast upon that anticipated meeting the terrible foreshadowing of dread which must inevitably result from a second speech. I thank you most heartily and I most sincerely and fervently say to you, "Good night, and God bless you." In reference to the appropriate and excellent remarks of Mr. Dixon, I will now discharge my conscience of my political creed, which is contained in two articles, and has no reference to any party or persons. My faith in the people governing is, on the whole, infinitesimal; my faith in the People governed is, on the whole, illimitable.

XXXII.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY DINNER.

LONDON, *May* 2, 1870.

[On the occasion of the Second Exhibition of the Royal Academy in their new galleries in Piccadilly, the President, Sir F. Grant, and the Council gave their usual inaugurative banquet, and a very distinguished company was present. The dinner took place in the large central room, and covers were laid for 200 guests. The Prince of Wales acknowledged the toast of his health and that of the Princess, the Duke of Cambridge responded to the toast of the army, Mr. Childers to the navy, Lord Elcho to the volunteers, Mr. Motley to "The Prosperity of the United States," Mr. Gladstone to "Her Majesty's Ministers," the Archbishop of York to "The Guests," and Mr. Dickens to "Literature." The last toast having been proposed in a highly eulogistic speech, Mr. Dickens responded:]

MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESSES, MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN—I beg to acknowledge the toast with which you have done me the great honour of associating my name. I beg to acknowledge it on behalf of the brotherhood of literature, present and absent, not for-

getting an illustrious wanderer from the fold, whose tardy return to it we all hail with delight, and who now sits—or lately did sit—within a few chairs of or on your left hand. I hope I may also claim to acknowledge the toast on behalf of the sisterhood of literature also, although that "better half of human nature," to which Mr. Gladstone rendered his graceful tribute, is unworthily represented here, in the present state of its rights and wrongs, by the devouring monster, man.

All the arts, and many of the sciences, bear witness that women, even in their present oppressed condition, can attain to quite as great distinction, and can win quite as lofty names as men. Their emancipation (as I am given to understand) drawing very near, there is no saying how soon they may "push us from our stools" at these tables, or how soon our better half of human nature, standing in this place of mine, may eloquently depreciate mankind, addressing another better half of human nature sitting in the president's chair.

The literary visitors of the Royal Academy to-night desire me to congratulate their hosts on a very interesting exhibition, in which risen excellence supremely asserts itself, and from which promise of a brilliant succession in time to come is not wanting. They naturally see with especial interest the writings and persons of great men—historians, philosophers, poets, and novelists, vividly illustrated around them here. And they hope that they may modestly claim to have rendered some little assistance towards the production of many of the pictures in this magnificent gallery. For without the patient labours of some among them unhistoric history might have long survived in this place, and but for the researches and wandering of others among them, the most preposterous countries, the most impossible peoples, and the absurdest superstitions, manners, and customs, might have usurped the place of truth upon these walls. Nay, there is no knowing, Sir Francis Grant, what unlike portraits you yourself might have painted if you had been left, with your sisters, to idle pens, unchecked reckless rumours, and undenounced lying malevolence.

I cannot forbear, before I resume my seat, adverting to a sad theme (the recent death of Daniel Maclise) to which his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales made

allusion, and to which the president referred with the eloquence of genuine feeling. Since I first entered the public lists, a very young man indeed, it has been my constant fortune to number amongst my nearest and dearest friends members of the Royal Academy who have been its grace and pride. They have so dropped from my side one by one, that I already begin to feel like the Spanish monk of whom Wilkie tells, who had grown to believe that the only realities around him were the pictures which he loved, and that all the moving life he saw, or ever had seen, was a shadow and a dream.

For many years I was one of the two most intimate friends and most constant companions of the late Mr. Maclise. Of his genius in his chosen art I will venture to say nothing here, but of his prodigious fertility of mind and wonderful wealth of intellect I may confidently assert that they would have made him, if he had been so minded, at least as great a writer as he was a painter. The gentlest and most modest of men, the freshest as to his generous appreciation of young aspirants, and the frankest and largest-hearted as to his peers, incapable of a sordid or ignoble thought, gallantly sustaining the true dignity of his vocation, without one grain of self-ambition, wholesomely natural at the last as at the first, "in wit a man, simplicity a child," no artist, of whatsoever denomination, I make bold to say, ever went to his rest leaving a golden memory more pure from dross, or having himself devoted with a truer chivalry to the art goddess whom he worshipped.

[These were the last public words of Charles Dickens.]

PLAYS OF CHARLES DICKENS

THE VILLAGE COQUETTES

A COMIC OPERA IN TWO ACTS

(*Music by John Hullah*)

[1836]

DEDICATION

To J. P. HARLEY, ESQ.

My dear Sir,

My dramatic bantlings are no sooner born, than you father them. You have made my "Strange Gentleman" exclusively your own; you have adopted Martin Stokes with equal readiness; and you still profess your willingness to do the same kind office for all future scions of the same stock.

I dedicate to you the first play I ever published; and you made for me the first play I ever produced—the balance is in your favour, and I am afraid it will remain so

That you may long contribute to the amusement of the public, and long be spared to shed a lustre, by the honour and integrity of your private life, on the profession which for many years you have done so much to uphold, is the sincere and earnest wish of, my dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully,

CHARLES DICKENS.

December 15th, 1836.

PREFACE.

"Either the Honourable Gentleman is in the right, or he is not," is a phrase in very common use within the walls of Parliament. This drama may have a plot, or it may not; and the songs may be poetry, or they may not; and the whole affair, from beginning to end, may be great nonsense, or it may not, just as the honourable gentleman or lady who reads it may happen to think. So, retaining his own private and particular opinion upon the subject (an opinion which he formed upwards of a year ago, when he wrote the piece), the Author leaves every such gentleman or lady, to form his or hers, as he or she may think proper, without saying one word to influence or conciliate them.

All he wishes to say is this—That he hopes Mr. Braham, and all the performers who assisted in the representation of this opera, will accept his warmest thanks for the interest they evinced in it, from its very first rehearsal, and for their zealous efforts in his behalf—efforts which have crowned it with a degree of success far exceeding his most sanguine anticipations; and of which no form of words could speak his acknowledgment.

It is needless to add that the *libretto* of an opera must be, to a certain extent, a mere vehicle for the music; and that it is scarcely fair or reasonable to judge it by those strict rules of criticism which would be justly applicable to a five-act tragedy, or a finished comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

At St. James's Theatre, December 6, 1836.

Squire Norton	Mr. Braham.
The Hon. Sparkins Flam (*his friend*) . .	Mr. Forester.
Old Benson (*a small farmer*) . . .	Mr. Strickland.
Mr. Martin Stokes (*a very small farmer with a very large circle of particular friends*) .	Mr. Harley.
George Edmunds (*betrothed to Lucy*) . .	Mr. Bennett.
Young Benson	Mr. J. Parry.
John Maddox (*attached to Rose*) . . .	Mr. Gardner.
Lucy Benson	Miss Rainforth.
Rose (*her cousin*)	Miss J. Smith.

Time occupied in Representation.—Two hours and a half.

PERIOD.—THE AUTUMN OF 1729.

SCENE.—AN ENGLISH VILLAGE.

The Passages marked with inverted commas were omitted in the representation.

THE VILLAGE COQUETTES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Rick-yard, with a cart laden with corn-sheaves.* JOHN MADDOX, *and labourers, unloading it. Implements of husbandry, etc., lie scattered about. A gate on one side.* JOHN MADDOX *is in the cart, and dismounts at the conclusion of the Chorus.*

Round.

Hail to the merry Autumn days, when yellow cornfields shine,
Far brighter than the costly cup that holds the monarch's wine!
Hail to the merry harvest time, the gayest of the year,
The time of rich and bounteous crops, rejoicing, and good cheer!

'Tis pleasant on a fine Spring morn to see the buds expand,
'Tis pleasant in the Summer time to view the teeming land;
'Tis pleasant on a Winter's night to crouch around the blaze—
But what are joys like these, my boys, to Autumn's merry days!

Then hail to merry Autumn days, when yellow cornfields shine,
Far brighter than the costly cup that holds the monarch's wine!
And hail to merry harvest time, the gayest of the year,
The time of rich and bounteous crops, rejoicing, and good cheer!

JOHN. Well done, my lads; a good day's work, and a warm one. Here, Tom (*to Villager*), run into the house, and ask Miss Rose to send out some beer for the men, and a jug for Master Maddox; and d'ye hear, Tom, tell Miss Rose it's a fine evening, and that if she'll step out herself, it'll do her good, and do me good into the bargain. (*Exit Villager.*) That's right, my lads, stow these sheaves away, before the sun goes down. Let's begin fresh in the morning, without any leavings of to-day. By this time to-morrow the last load will have been carried, and then for our harvest-home!

VILLAGERS. Hurrah! Hurrah!

(*First four lines of Round repeated.*)

Enter MARTIN STOKES.

MARTIN. Very good! very good, indeed!—always sing while you work—capital custom! I always do when I work, and I never work at all when I can help it—another capital custom. John, old fellow, how are you?—give us your hand—hearty squeeze—good shake—capital custom number three. Fine dry weather for the harvest, John. Talking of that, I'm dry too: you always give away plenty of beer, here—capital custom number four. Trouble you for the loan of that can, John.

JOHN (*taking it from the cart*). Here's the can, but as to there being anything good in it it's as dry as the weather, and as empty as you. Hoo! hoo! (*laughing boisterously, is suddenly checked by a look from* MARTIN).

MARTIN. Hallo, John, hallo! I have often told you before, Mr. Maddox, that I don't consider you in a situation of life which entitles you to make jokes, far less to laugh at 'em. If you must make a joke, do it solemnly, and respectfully. If *I* laugh, that's quite enough, and it must be far more gratifying to your feelings than any contortions of that enormous mouth of yours.

JOHN. Well, perhaps, as you say, I oughtn't to make jokes till I arrive, like you, at the dignity of a small piece of ground and a cottage; but I must laugh at a joke, sometimes.

MARTIN. Must, must you!—Rather presuming fellow, this Maddox. (*Aside.*)

JOHN. Why, when you make one of them rum jokes of yours—'cod, I must laugh then!

MARTIN. Oh! ah! you may laugh then, John; always laugh at my jokes—capital custom number five; no harm in that, because you can't help it, you know.—Knowing fellow, though. (*Aside*).

JOHN. Remember that joke about the old cow, as you made five years ago?—'cod, that was a joke! Hoo! hoo! hoo!—I never shall forget that joke. I never see a cow, to this day, without laughing.

MARTIN. Ha! ha! ha! very good, very good!—Devilish clever fellow this! (*Aside.*) Well, Jack, you behave yourself well, all the evening, and perhaps I may make that joke again before the day's out.

JOHN. Thank 'ee, that's very kind.

MARTIN. Don't mention it, don't mention it; but I say, John, I called to speak to you about more important matters.—Something wrong here, an't there? (*Mysteriously.*)

JOHN. Wrong! you're always fancying something wrong.

MARTIN. Fancying—come, I like that. I say, why don't you keep your harvest-home at home, to-morrow night? Why are we all to go up to the Squire's, as if we couldn't be merry in Benson's barn? And why is the Squire always coming down here, looking after some people, and cutting out other people?—an't that wrong? Where's George Edmunds—old Benson's so fond of, and that Lucy *was* fond of too, once upon a time—eh? An't that wrong? Where's your sweetheart, Rose?—An't her walkings, and gigglings, and whisperings, and simperings, with the Squire's friend, Mr. Sparkins Flam, the talk of the whole place? Nothing wrong there—eh? (MADDOX *gocs up.*) Had him there; I knew there was something wrong. I'll keep a sharp eye upon these doings, for I don't like these new-fangled customs. It was all very well in the old time, to see the Squire's father come riding among the people on his bay cob, nodding to the common folks, shaking hands with me, and all that sort of thing; but when you change the old country-gentleman into a dashing fop from London, and the steady old steward into Mr. Sparkins Flam, the case is very different. We shall see—but if I might tell Miss Lucy Benson a bit of my mind, I should say,

"Stick to an independent young fellow, like George Edmunds, and depend upon it you will be happier than you would with all the show and glitter of a squire's lady." And I should say to Rose, very solemn, "Rose——"

ROSE *enters unperceived, with beer.*

"Rose——"

ROSE (*starting*). Lord bless us! What a hollow voice!—Why, it's Mr. Stokes!—What on earth is the matter with him?

MARTIN (*not seeing her*). Rose—if you would be happy and contented, if you would escape destruction, shield yourself from dangerous peril, and save yourself from horrid ruin!—

ROSE. What dreadful words!—

MARTIN. You will at once, and without delay, bestow your hand on John Maddox; or if you would aspire to a higher rank in life, and a loftier station in society, you will cultivate the affections of Mr. Stokes—Mr. Martin Stokes—a young gentleman of great mental attractions, and very considerable personal charms; leaving the false and fatal Flam to the ignominious fate which——

ROSE. Why, Mr. Stokes.—

MARTIN. Ignominious fate which——

ROSE. Dear, he must be in a fit! Mr. Stokes!

MARTIN. Eh?—Ah! Miss Rose—It's you, is it?

ROSE. Me! Yes, and here have I been waiting all this time, while you were talking nonsense to yourself. Here, I have brought you some beer.

MARTIN. Oh! Miss Rose, if you go on in this way, you'll bring us to our bier, instead of bringing our beer to us. (*Looking round.*) You may laugh, if you want to, very much, John.

JOHN. Hoo! hoo! hoo!

ROSE. Be quiet, oaf! And pray, sir (*to* MARTIN), to what may your most humorous observation refer?

MARTIN. Why, my dear Miss Rose, you know my way—always friendly—always thinking of the welfare of those I like best, and very seldom receiving any gratitude in return.

ROSE. I know you very seldom deserve any.

MARTIN. Ah! that's exactly my meaning; that's the way, you see. The moment I begin to throw out a hint to one of my dear friends, out comes some unkind and rude remark. But I bear it all for their sakes. I won't allow you to raise my ill nature—you shan't stop me. I was going to say—don't you think—now *don't* you think—that you—don't be angry—make rather—don't colour up—*rather* too free with Mr. Sparkins Flam?

ROSE. *I* make free with Mr. Sparkins Flam! Why you odious, insolent creature!

MARTIN. Ah, of course—always the way—I told you so—I knew you'd say that.

ROSE. And you, John, you mean-spirited scarecrow; will you stand there, and see me insulted by an officious, impertinent——

MARTIN. Go on, go on! (*A gun fired.*) Hallo! (*Looking off.*) Here they are, the Squire and Mr. Sparkins Flam.

ROSE (*hastily adjusting her dress*). My goodness! Mr. Spar——run, John, run, there's a dear!

JOHN (*not moving*). Very dear, I dare say.

ROSE. Run, and tell my uncle and Lucy, that Mr. Spar—— I mean that the Squire's coming.

JOHN. I wouldn't ha' gone anyhow; but nobody need go now, for here they are. Now, I'm extinguished for the rest of the day.

Enter through the gate SQUIRE NORTON *and* MR. SPARKINS FLAM, *dressed for sporting, with guns, etc., and two Gamekeepers. On the other side,* OLD BENSON *and* LUCY. MARTIN, *during the whole scene, thrusts himself in the* SQUIRE'S *way, to be taken notice of.*

SQUIRE (*to Gamekeeper, and putting down his gun*). Take the birds into the house. Benson, we have had a good day's sport, but a tiring one; and as the load is heavy for my fellows, you'll let our game remain where it is. I could not offer it to a better friend.

BENSON. Your honour's very good, but——

SQUIRE. Nay, you make a merit of receiving the smallest favour.

BENSON. Not a merit of receiving, nor a boast of refusing it; but a man in humble station should be cautious how he receives favours from those above him, which he never asks, and can never return. I have

had too many such favours forced upon me by your honour, lately, and would rather not increase the number.

SQUIRE. But such a trifle——

BENSON. A trifle from an equal, but a condescension from a superior. Let your men carry your birds up to the Hall, sir, or, if they are tired, mine shall do it for them, and welcome. (*Retires up.*)

FLAM (*aside*). Swine and independence! Leather breeches and liberty!

SQUIRE. At least I may be permitted to leave a few brace, as a present to the ladies. Lucy, I hope, will not object. (*Crosses to her.*)

LUCY. I feel much flattered by your honour's politeness —and—and—and——

ROSE. My cousin means to say, sir, that we're very much obliged to your honour and Mr. Flam for your politeness, and that we are very willing to accept of anything, your honour.

FLAM (*aside*). Condescending little savage!

SQUIRE. You have spoken well, both for yourself and your cousin. Flam, this is Rose—the pretty little Rose, you know.

FLAM. Know! can I ever forget the charming Rose—the beautiful—the—the—(*aside*) the Cabbage Rose!

SQUIRE (*aside*). Keep that girl engaged, while I talk to the other one.

ROSE. Oh, Mr. Flam!

FLAM. Oh, Miss Rose! (*He salutes her.*)

BENSON. Your honour will not object to taste our ale, after your day's sport. The afternoon is fresh and cool, and 'twill be pleasant here in the air. Here, Ben, Thomas, bring mugs here—quick—quick—and a seat for his honour.

[*Exeunt* BENSON, MADDOX, *etc.*

SQUIRE. It will be delightful—won't it, Flam?

FLAM. Inexpressibly charming! (*Aside.*) An amateur tea-garden. (*He retires a little up with* ROSE—*she coquetting.*)

SQUIRE (*to* LUCY). And in such society, how much the pleasure will be enhanced!

LUCY. Your honour knows I ought not to listen to you —George Edmunds would——

SQUIRE. Edmunds! a rustic!—you cannot love that Edmunds, Lucy. Forget him—remember your own worth.

LUCY. I wish I could, sir. My heart will tell me though, weak and silly as I am, that I cannot better show the consciousness of my own worth than by remaining true to my first and early love. Your honour rouses my foolish pride· but real true love is not to be forgotten easily.

Song.—LUCY.

Love is not a feeling to pass away,
Like the balmy breath of a summer day;
It is not—it cannot be—laid aside;
It is not a thing to forget or hide.
It clings to the heart, ah, woe is me!
As the ivy clings to the old oak tree.

Love is not a passion of earthly mould,
As a thirst for honour, or fame, or gold:
For when all these wishes have died away,
The deep strong love of a brighter day,
Though nourish'd in secret, consumes the more,
As the slow rust eats to the iron's core.

Re-enter OLD BENSON, JOHN MADDOX, *and Villagers, with jugs, seats, etc.* SQUIRE NORTON *seats himself next* LUCY, *and* ROSE *contrives to sit next* MR. SPARKINS FLAM, *which* MARTIN *and* MADDOX *in vain endeavour to prevent.*

SQUIRE. Flam, you know these honest people? all tenants of my own.

FLAM. Oh, yes, I know 'em—pleasant fellows! This—this is—what's his name?

BENSON. Martin, sir—Martin Stokes.

MARTIN (*starting forward*). A—a—*Mr.* Stokes, at your service, sir—how do you do, sir? (*shaking* FLAM *by the hand, while speaking*). I hope you are quite well, sir; I am delighted to see you looking so well, sir. I hope your majestic father, and your fashionable mother, are in the enjoyment of good health, sir. I should have spoken to you before, sir, only you have been so very much engaged, that I couldn't succeed in catching your honourable eye—very happy to see you, sir.

FLAM. Ah. Pleasant fellow, this Martin!—agreeable manners—no reserve about him.

MARTIN. Sir, you do me a great deal of honour. Mr. Norton, sir, I have the honour of drinking your remarkably good health—I admire you, sir.

SQUIRE (*laughing*). Sir, I feel highly gratified, I'm sure.

MARTIN (*aside*). He's gratified!—I flatter myself I have produced a slight impression here. (*Drinks.*)

FLAM (*turns round, sees* MADDOX). Ah, Ox!

JOHN. *Ox!* Who do you call Ox? Maddox is my name.

FLAM. Oh, mad Ox! true; I forgot the lunacy—your health, mad Ox.

SQUIRE (*rising and coming forward*). Come, Flam, another glass. Here, friends, is success to our harvest-home!

MARTIN. Hear, hear! a most appropriate toast, most eloquently given— a charming sentiment, delightfully expressed. Gentlemen (*to Villagers*), allow me to have the pleasure of proposing Mr. Norton, if you please. Take your time from me. (*He gives the time, and they all cheer.*) Mr. Norton, sir, I beg to call upon you for a song.

Song.—SQUIRE NORTON.

That very wise head, old Æsop, said,
The bow should be sometimes loose;
Keep it tight for ever, the string you sever—
Let's turn his old moral to use.
The world forget, and let us yet,
The glass our spirits buoying,
Revel to-night in those moments bright
Which make life worth enjoying.
The cares of the day, old moralists say,
Are quite enough to perplex one;
Then drive to-day's sorrow away till to-morrow,
And then put it off till the next one.
Chorus.—The cares of the day, etc.

Some plodding old crones, the heartless drones!
Appeal to my cool reflection,
And ask me whether such nights can ever
Charm sober recollection.
Yes, yes! I cry, I'll grieve and die,

When those I love forsake me;
But while friends so dear surround me here,
Let Care, if he can, o'ertake me.
Chorus.—The cares of the day, etc.

(*During the Chorus,* SQUIRE NORTON *and* FLAM *resume their guns, and go up the stage, followed by the various characters. The Chorus concludes as the Scene closes.*)

SCENE II.—*An open spot near the village, with stile and pathway leading to the church, which is seen in the distance.*

GEORGE EDMUNDS *enters, with a stick in his hand.*

EDMUNDS. How thickly the fallen leaves lie scattered at the feet of that old row of elm-trees! When I first met Lucy on this spot, it was a fine spring day, and those same leaves were trembling in the sunshine, as green and bright as if their beauty would last for ever. What a contrast they present now, and how true an emblem of my own lost happiness!

Song.—GEORGE EDMUNDS.

Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here;
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!
How like the hopes of childhood's day,
Thick clustering on the bough!
How like those hopes is their decay—
How faded are they now!
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here;
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, that fly before the gale;
Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, ye tell a mournful tale,
Of love once true, and friends once kind,
And happy moments fled:
Dispersed by every breath of wind,
Forgotten, changed, or dead!

Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here;
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

An hour past the old time, and still no Lucy! 'Tis useless lingering here: I'll wait no longer. A female crossing the meadow!—'Tis Rose, the bearer of a letter or a message perhaps.

Enter ROSE. (*She avoids him.*)

No! Then I will see Lucy at once, without a moment's delay. (*Going.*)

ROSE. No, no, you can't. (*Aside.*) There'll certainly be bloodshed! I am quite certain Mr. Flam will kill him. He offered me, with the most insinuating speeches, to cut John's throat at a moment's notice: and when the Squire complimented him on being a good shot, he said he should like to "bag" the whole male population of the village. (*To him.*) You can't see her.

EDMUNDS. Not see her, and she at home! Were you instructed to say this, Rose?

ROSE. I say it, because I know you can't see her. She is not well; and—and——

EDMUNDS. And Mr. Norton is there, you would say.

ROSE. Mr. Norton!

EDMUNDS. Yes, Mr. Norton. Was he not there last evening? Was he not there the evening before? Is he not there at this moment?

Enter JOHN MADDOX.

JOHN. There at this moment?—of course he is.

ROSE (*aside*). John here!

JOHN. Of course he is; of course he was there last night; and of course he was there the evening before. He's always there, and so is his bosom friend and confidential demon, Mr. Sparkins Flam. Oh! George, we're injured men, both of us.

EDMUNDS. Heartless girl! (*Retires up.*)

JOHN (*to* ROSE). Faithless person!

ROSE. Don't call me a person.

JOHN. You *are* a person, perjured, treacherous, and deceiving! Oh! George, if you had seen what I have seen

to-day. Soft whisperings and loving smiles, gentle looks and encouraging sighs—such looks and sighs as used once upon a time to be bestowed on us, George! If you had seen the Squire making up to Lucy, and Rose making up to Flam—but I am very glad you did not see it, George, very. It would have broken your heart, as it has broken mine! Oh, Rose! could you break my heart?

ROSE. I could break your head with the greatest pleasure, you mischief-making booby; and if you don't make haste to wherever you're going, somebody that I know of will certainly do so, very quickly.

JOHN. Will he, will he?—your friend, Mr. Flam, I suppose! Let him—that's all; let him! (*Retires up.*)

ROSE. Oh! I'll let him: you needn't be afraid of my interfering. Dear, dear, I wish Mr. Flam would come, for I will own, notwithstanding what graver people may say, that I enjoy a little flirtation as much as any one.

Song.—ROSE.

Some folks who have grown old and sour,
Say love does nothing but annoy.
The fact is, they have had their hour,
So envy what they can't enjoy.
I like the glance—I like the sigh—
That does of ardent passion tell!
If some folks were as young as I,
I'm sure they'd like it quite as well.

Old maiden aunts so hate the men,
So well know how wives are harried,
It makes them sad—not jealous—when
They see their poor dear nieces married.
All men are fair and false, they know,
And with deep sighs they assail 'em,
It's so long since they tried men, though,
I rather think their memories fail 'em.

—Here comes Mr. Flam. You'd better go, John. I know you'll be murdered.

JOHN. Here I shall stop; let him touch me, and he shall feel the weight of my indignation.

Enter FLAM.

FLAM. Ah, my charmer! Punctual to my time, you see, my sweet little Damask Rose!

JOHN (*coming down*). A great deal more like a monthly one—constantly changing, and gone the moment you wear it.

ROSE. Impertinent creature!

FLAM. Who is this poetical cauliflower?

JOHN. Don't pretend not to know me. You know who I am, well enough.

FLAM. As I live, it's the Ox!—retire, Ox, to your pasture, and don't rudely disturb the cooing of the doves. Go and graze, Ox!

JOHN. Suppose I choose to remain here, what then?

FLAM. Why, then you must be driven off, mad Ox. (*To* ROSE). Who is that other grasshopper?

ROSE. Hush, hush! for Heaven's sake don't let him hear you! It's young Edmunds.

FLAM. Young Edmunds? And who the devil is young Edmunds? For beyond the natural inference that young Edmunds is the son of old Edmunds, curse me if the fame of young Edmunds has ever reached my ears.

ROSE (*in a low tone*). It's Lucy's former lover, whom she has given up for the Squire.

FLAM. The rejected cultivator?

ROSE. The same.

FLAM. Ah! I guessed as much from his earthy appearance. But, my darling Rose, I must speak with you—I must—(*putting his arm round her waist, sees* JOHN). Good-bye, Ox!

JOHN. Good-bye!

FLAM. Pleasant walk to you, Ox!

JOHN (*not moving*). Thank'ee—same to you!

FLAM. That other clodpole must not stay here either.

ROSE. Yes, yes! he neither sees nor hears us. Pray let him remain.

FLAM (*to* JOHN). You understand, Ox, that it is my wish that you forthwith retire and graze—or in other words, that you at once, and without delay, betake yourself to the farm, or the devil, or any other place where you are in your element, and won't be in the way.

JOHN. Oh yes, I understand that.

FLAM. Very well; then the sooner you create a scarcity of such animals in this market, the better. Now, my

dear Rose (*puts his arm round her waist again*). Are you gone, Ox?

JOHN. No.

FLAM. Are you going?

JOHN. By no means.

FLAM. This insolence is not to be borne.

ROSE. Oh, pray don't hurt him—pray don't. Go away, you stupid creature, if you don't want to be ruined.

JOHN. That's just the very advice I would give you, Rose; do *you* go away, if you don't want to be ruined. As for me, this is a public place, and here I'll remain just as long as I think proper.

FLAM (*quitting* ROSE, *and advancing towards him*). You will?

JOHN. I will.

ROSE. Oh, dear, dear! I knew he'd be murdered all along. I was quite certain of it.

JOHN. Don't frown and scowl at me—it won't do—it only makes me smile; and when you talk of insolence and put my blood up, I tell you at once, that I am not to be bullied.

FLAM. Bullied?

JOHN. Ay, bullied was the word—bullied by a coward, if you like that better.

FLAM. Coward! (*Seizes his gun by the barrel, and aims a blow at him, with the butt-end;* EDMUNDS *rushes forward, and strikes it up with his stick.*)

EDMUNDS. Hold your hand, sir—hold your hand, or I'll fell you to the ground. Maddox, leave this place directly: take the opposite path, and I'll follow you. (*Exit* MADDOX.) As for you, sir, who by the way of vindicating yourself from the charge of cowardice, raise your gun against an unarmed man, tell your protector, the Squire, from me, that he and his companions might content themselves with turning the heads of our farmers' daughters, and endeavouring to corrupt their hearts, without wantonly insulting the men they have most injured. Let this be a lesson to you, sir—although you were armed, you would have had the worst of a scuffle and you may not have the benefit of a third person's interference at so critical a moment, another time—remember this warning, sir, and benefit by it. [*Exit.*

FLAM (*aside*). If Norton does not take a dear revenge for

this insult, I have lost my influence with him. Bully! coward! They shall rue it.

Rose (*with her apron to her eyes*). Oh, Mr. Flam! I can't bear to think that you should have suffered all this, on my account.

Flam (*aside*). On her account!—a little vanity! (*To her.*) Suffered! Why, my dear, it was the drollest and most humorous affair that ever happened. Here stand I—the Honourable Sparkins Flam—on this second day of September, one thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine; and positively and solemnly declare that all the coffee-houses, play-houses, faro-tables, brag-tables, assemblies, drums and routs of a whole season put together could not furnish such a splendid piece of exquisite drollery. The idea is admirable. My affecting to quarrel with a ploughman, and submitting to be lectured by another caterpillar, whom I suffer to burst into a butterfly importance!

Rose. Then you were not really quarrelling?

Flam. Bless you, no! I was only acting.

Rose! Lor'! how well you do act, to be sure.

Flam. Come, let us retire into the house, or after this joke we shall be the gaze of all the animated potatoes that are planted in this hole of a village. Why do you hesitate, Damask?

Rose. Why, I have just been thinking that if you go to all these coffee-houses, and play-houses, and fairs, and brags, and keep playing drums, and rousing people about, you'll forget me, when you go back to London.

Flam (*aside*). More than probable. (*To her.*) Never fear; you will be generally known as Rose the lovely, and I shall be universally denominated Flam the constant.

Duet.—Rose *and* Sparkins Flam.

Flam. 'Tis true I'm caress'd by the witty,
The envy of all the fine beaux,
The pet of the court and the city,
But still I'm the lover of Rose.

Rose. Country sweethearts, oh, how I despise!
And oh! how delighted I am

To think that I shine in the eyes
Of the elegant—sweet—Mr. Flam.

FLAM. Allow me (*offers to kiss her*).
ROSE. Pray don't be so bold, sir. (*Kisses her.*)
FLAM. What sweets on that honey'd lip hang!
ROSE. Your presumption, I know, I should scold, sir,
But I really *can't* scold Mr. Flam.

BOTH. Then let us be happy together,
Content with the world as it goes,
An unchangeable couple for ever,
Mr. Flam and his beautiful Rose. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Farmer's Kitchen. A table and chairs.*

Enter OLD BENSON *and* MARTIN.

BENSON. Well, Stokes. Now you have the opportunity you have desired, and we are alone, I am ready to listen to the information which you wished to communicate to my private ear.
MARTIN. Exactly—you said information, I think?
BENSON. *You* said information, or I have forgotten.
MARTIN. Just so, exactly; I said information. I *did* say information, why should I deny it?
BENSON. I see no necessity for your doing so, certainly. Pray go on.
MARTIN. Why, you see, my dear Mr. Benson, the fact is—won't you be seated? Pray sit down (*brings forward two chairs—they sit*). There, now—let me see—where was I?
BENSON. You were going to begin, I think.
MARTIN. Oh—ah!—so I was—I hadn't begun, had I?
BENSON. No, no! Pray begin again, if you had.
MARTIN. Well, then, what I have got to say is not so much information, as a kind of advice, or suggestion, or hint, or something of that kind: and it relates to—eh?—(*looking very mysterious*).
BENSON. What?
MARTIN. Yes (*nodding*). Don't you think there's something wrong there?
BENSON. Where?

MARTIN. In that quarter.

BENSON. In what quarter? Speak more plainly, sir.

MARTIN. You know what a friendly feeling I entertain to your family. You know what a very particular friend of mine you are. You know how anxious I always am to prevent anything going wrong.

BENSON. Well! (*abruptly*).

MARTIN. Yes, I see you're very sensible of it, but I'll take it for granted: you needn't bounce and fizz about, in that way, because it makes one nervous. Don't you think, now, *don't* you think, that ill-natured people may say—don't be angry, you know, because if I wasn't a very particular friend of the family, I wouldn't mention the subject on any account—don't you think that ill-natured people may say there's something wrong in the frequency of the Squire's visits here?

BENSON (*starting up furiously*). What!

MARTIN (*aside*). Here he goes again!

BENSON. Who dares suspect my child?

MARTIN. Ah, to be sure, that's exactly what I say. Who dares? Damme, I should like to see 'em!

BENSON. Is it you?

MARTIN. I! Bless you, no, not for the world! I!—Come that's a good one. I only say what other people say, you know; that's all.

BENSON. And what are these tales, that idle busy fools prate of with delight, among themselves, caring not whose ears they reach, so long as they are kept from the old man, whose blindness—the blindness of a fond and doting father—is subject for their rude and brutal jeering. What are they?

MARTIN. Dear me, Mr. Benson, you keep me in a state of perpetual excitement.

BENSON. Tell me, without equivocation, what do they say?

MARTIN. Why, they say they think it—not exactly wrong, perhaps; don't fly out, now—but among those remarkable coincidences which do occur sometimes, that whenever you go out of your house, the Squire and his friend should come into it; that Miss Lucy and Miss Rose, in the long walks they take every day, should be met and walked home with by the same gentlemen; that long after you have gone to bed at night, the Squire and Mr. Sparkins Flam should still be seen hovering about the

lane and meadow; and that one of the lattice windows should be always open, at that hour.

BENSON. This is all?

MARTIN. Ye—yes—yes, that's all.

BENSON. Nothing beside?

MARTIN. Eh?

BENSON. Nothing beside?

MARTIN. Why, there *is* something else, but I know you'll begin to bounce about again, if I tell it you.

BENSON. No, no! let me hear it all.

MARTIN. Why, then, they do say that the Squire has been heard to boast that he had practised on Lucy's mind—that when he bid her, she would leave her father and her home, and follow him over the world.

BENSON. They lie! Her breast is pure and innocent! Her soul is free from guilt; her mind from blemish. They lie! I'll not believe it. Are they mad? Do they think that I stand tamely by, and look upon my child's disgrace? Heaven! do they know of what a father's heart is made?

MARTIN. My dear Mr. Benson, if you——

BENSON. This coarse and brutal boast shall be disowned. (*Going;* MARTIN *stops him.*)

MARTIN. My dear Mr. Benson, you know it may not have been made after all—my dear sir——

BENSON (*struggling*). Unhand me, Martin! Made or not made, it has gone abroad, fixing an infamous notoriety on me and mine. I'll hear its truth or falsehood from himself. (*Breaks from him and exit.*)

MARTIN (*solus*). There'll be something decidedly wrong here presently. Hallo! here's another very particular friend in a fume.

Enter YOUNG BENSON *hastily.*

MARTIN. Ah! my dear fellow, how——

YOUNG BENSON. Where is Lucy?

MARTIN. I don't know, unless she has walked out with the Squire.

YOUNG BENSON. The Squire!

MARTIN. To be sure; she very often walks out with the Squire. Very pleasant recreation walking out with the Squire—capital custom, an't it?

YOUNG BENSON. Where's my father?

MARTIN. Why, upon my word, I am unable to satisfy your curiosity in that particular either. All I know of him is that he whisked out of this room in a rather boisterous and turbulent manner for an individual at his time of life, some few seconds before you whisked in. But what's the matter?—you seem excited. Nothing wrong, is there?

YOUNG BENSON (*aside*). This treatment of Edmunds, and Lucy's altered behaviour to him, confirm my worst fears. Where is Mr. Norton?

MARTIN (*calling off*). Ah! to be sure—where is Mr. Norton?

Enter SQUIRE.

SQUIRE. Mr. Norton is here. Who wishes to see him?

MARTIN. To be sure, sir. Mr. Norton is here: who wishes to see him?

YOUNG BENSON. I do.

MARTIN. I don't. Old fellow, good-bye! Mr. Norton, good evening! (*Aside.*) There'll be something wrong here, in a minute.

SQUIRE. Well, young man?

YOUNG BENSON. If you contemplate treachery here, Mr. Norton, look to yourself. My father is an old man; the chief prop of his declining years is his child—my sister. For your actions here, sir, you shall render a dear account to me.

SQUIRE. To *you*, peasant!

YOUNG BENSON. To me, sir. One other scene like that enacted by your creature, at your command, to-night, may terminate more seriously to him. For your behaviour here you are responsible to me.

SQUIRE. Indeed! Anything more, sir?

YOUNG BENSON. Simply this: after injuring the old man beyond reparation and embittering the last moments of his life, you may possibly attempt to shield yourself under the paltry excuse, that, as a gentleman, you cannot descend to take the consequences from my hand. You *shall* take them from me, sir, if I strike you to the earth first. [*Exit.*

SQUIRE. Fiery and valorous, indeed! As the suspicions of the family are aroused, no time is to be lost: the girl must be carried off to-night, if possible. With Flam's assistance and management, she may be speedily re-

moved from within the reach of these rustic sparks. In my cooler moments, the reflection of the misery I may inflict upon the old man makes my conduct appear base and dishonourable, even to myself. Pshaw! hundreds have done the same thing before me, who have been lauded and blazoned forth as men of honour. Honour in such cases—an idle tale!—a by-word! Honour! There is much to be gleaned from old tales; and the legend of the child and the old man speaks but too truly.

Song.—Squire Norton.

The child and the old man sat alone
In the quiet peaceful shade
Of the old green boughs, that had richly grown
In the deep thick forest glade.
It was a soft and pleasant sound,
That rustling of the oak;
And the gentle breeze play'd lightly round,
As thus the fair boy spoke:

"Dear father, what can honour be,
Of which I hear men rave?
Field, cell and cloister, land and sea,
The tempest and the grave:
It lives in all, 'tis sought in each,
'Tis never heard or seen:
Now tell me, father, I beseech,
What can this honour mean?"

"It is a name—a name, my child—
It lived in other days,
When men were rude, their passions wild,
Their sport, thick battle-frays.
When in armour bright, the warrior bold,
Knelt to his lady's eyes:
Beneath the abbey-pavement old
That warrior's dust now lies.

"The iron hearts of that old day
Have moulder'd in the grave;
And chivalry has pass'd away,
With knights so true and brave;
The honour, which to them was life,
Throbs in no bosom now;

It only gilds the gambler's strife,
Or decks the worthless vow." *

Enter LUCY.

SQUIRE. Lucy, dear Lucy.

LUCY. Let me entreat you not to stay here, sir! you will be exposed to nothing but insult and attack. Edmunds and my brother have both returned, irritated at something that has passed with my cousin Rose—for my sake—for my sake, Mr. Norton, spare me the pain of witnessing what will ensue, if they find you here. You little know what I have borne already.

SQUIRE. For your sake, Lucy I would do much; but why should I leave you to encounter the passion and ill will from which you would have me fly?

LUCY. Oh, I can bear it, sir; I deserve it but too well.

SQUIRE. Deserve it!—you do yourself an injustice, Lucy. No; rather let me remove you from a house where you will suffer nothing but persecution, and confer upon you a title which the proudest lady in the land might wear. Here—here, on my knees (*he bends on his knee, and seizes her hand*).

Enter FLAM.

"SQUIRE (*rising*). Flam here!

"FLAM (*aside*). Upon my word!—I thought we had been getting on pretty well in the open air, but they're beating us hollow here, under cover.

"SQUIRE. Lucy, but one word, and I understand your decision.

"LUCY. I—I cannot subdue the feelings of uneasiness and distrust which the great difference between your honour's rank and mine awakens in my mind.

"SQUIRE. Difference! Hundreds of such cases happen every day.

"LUCY. Indeed!

"SQUIRE. Oh, 'tis a matter of general notoriety—isn't it, Flam?

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* In John Hullah's music to this song, the last two lines are printed as follows:

"The name adorns the gambler's strife,
Or gilds the worthless vow."—ED.

"FLAM. No doubt of it. (*Aside.*) Don't exactly know yet what they are talking about, though.

"SQUIRE. A relation of my own, a man of exalted rank, courted a girl far his inferior in station, but only beneath him in that respect. In all others she was on a footing of equality with himself, if not far above him.

"LUCY. And were they married?

"FLAM (*aside*). Rather an important circumstance in the case. I *do* remember that.

"SQUIRE. They were—after a time, when the resentment of his friends, occasioned by his forming such an attachment, had subsided, and he was able to acknowledge her, without involving the ruin of both.

"LUCY. They were married privately at first, then?

"FLAM (*aside*). I must put in a word here. Oh, yes, it was all comfortably arranged to everybody's satisfaction—wasn't it, Norton?

"SQUIRE. Certainly. And a happy couple they were, weren't they, Flam?

"FLAM. Happiest of the happy. As happy as (*aside*)—a separation could make them.

"SQUIRE. Hundreds of great people have formed similar attachments—haven't they, Flam?

"FLAM. Undoubtedly. There was the Right Honourable Augustus Frederick Charles Thomson Camharado, and the German Baron Hyfenstyfenlooberhausen, and they were both married—(*aside*) to somebody else, first. Not to mention Damask and I, who are models of constancy. By the bye, I have lost sight of her, and I am interrupting you. (*Aside to* SQUIRE, *as he goes out.*) I came to tell you that she is ripe for an elopement, if you urge her strongly. Edmunds has been reproaching her to my knowledge. She'll consent while her passion lasts. [*Exit.*"

SQUIRE. Lucy, I wait your answer. One word from you, and a few hours will place you far beyond the reach of those who would fetter your choice and control your inclinations. You hesitate. Come, decide. The Squire's lady, or the wife of Edmunds!

Duet.—LUCY *and* SQUIRE NORTON.

SQUIRE. In rich and lofty station shine,
Before his jealous eyes:

In golden splendour, lady mine,
This peasant youth despise.

LUCY (*apart: the* SQUIRE *regarding her attentively*).
Oh! it would be revenge indeed
With scorn his glance to meet.
I, I, his humble pleading heed!
I'd spurn him from my feet.

SQUIRE. With love and rage her bosom's torn,
And rash the choice will be;
LUCY. With rage and love my bosom's torn,
And rash the choice will be.

SQUIRE. From hence she quickly must be borne,
Her home, her home, she'll flee.
LUCY. Oh! long shall I have cause to mourn
My home, my home, for thee!

Enter OLD BENSON.

BENSON. What do I see! The Squire and Lucy.

SQUIRE. Listen. A chaise and four fleet horses, under the direction of a trusty friend of mine, will be in waiting on the high road, at the corner of the Elm-Tree avenue, to-night, at ten o'clock. They shall bear you whither we can be safe, and in secret, by the first light of morning.

LUCY. His cruel harshness—it would be revenge, indeed. But my father—my poor old father!

SQUIRE. Your father is prejudiced in Edmunds' favour; and so long as he thinks there is any chance of your being his, he will oppose your holding communication with me. Situated as you are now, you only stand in the way of his wealth and advancement. Once fly with me, and in four-and-twenty hours you will be his pride, his boast, his support.

OLD BENSON *coming forward.*

BENSON. It is a lie, a base lie! (LUCY *shrieks and throws herself at his feet.*) My pride! my boast! She would be my disgrace, my shame: an outcast from her father's roof, and from the world. Support!—support *me* with the gold coined in her infamy and guilt! Heaven help me! Have I cherished her for this!

LUCY (*clinging to him*). Father!—dear, dear father!

SQUIRE. Hear me speak, Benson. Be calm.

BENSON. Calm!—Do you know that from infancy I have almost worshipped her, fancying that I saw in her young mind the virtues of a mother, to whom the anguish of this one hour would have been worse than death! Calm!—do you know that I have a heart and soul within me; or do you believe that because I am of lower station, I am a being of a different order from yourself, and that Nature has denied me thought and feeling! Calm! Man, do you know that I am this girl's father?

SQUIRE. Benson, if you will not hear me, at least do not, by hastily exposing this matter, deprive me of the inclination of making you some reparation.

BENSON. Reparation! You need be thankful, sir, for the grasp she has upon my arm. Money! If she were dying for want, and the smallest coin from you could restore her to life and health, sooner than she should take it from your hand, I would cast her from a sick-bed to perish on the road-side.

SQUIRE. Benson, a word.

BENSON. Do not, I caution you; do not talk to me, sir. I am an old man, but I do not know what passion may make me do.

SQUIRE. These are high words, Benson. A farmer!

BENSON. Yes, sir; a farmer, one of the men on whom you, and such as you, depend for the money they squander in profligacy and idleness. A farmer, sir! I care not for your long pedigree of ancestors—my forefathers made them all. Here, neighbours, friends! (ROSE, MADDOX, STOKES, *Villagers, etc., crowd on the stage.*) Hear this, hear this! your landlord, a high-born gentleman, entering the houses of your humble farmers, and tempting their daughters to destruction!

Enter YOUNG BENSON *and* GEORGE EDMUNDS.

YOUNG BENSON. What's that I hear? (*rushing towards the* SQUIRE, STOKES *interposes*).

MARTIN. Hallo, hallo! Take hold of the other one, John. (MADDOX *and he remove them to opposite sides of the stage*). Hold him tight, John, hold him tight. Stand still, there's a good fellow. Keep back, Squire. Knew there'd be something wrong—ready to come in at the nick of time—capital custom.

FLAM *enters and stands next the* SQUIRE.

SQUIRE. Exposed, baited! Benson, are you mad? Within the last few hours my friend here has been attacked and insulted on the very land you hold, by a person in your employ and young Edmunds there. I, too, have been threatened and insulted in the presence of my tenantry and workmen. Take care you do not drive me to extremities. Remember—the lease of this farm for seventy years, which your father took of mine, expires to-morrow; and that I have the power to refuse its renewal. Again I ask you, are you mad?

BENSON. Quit my house, villain!

SQUIRE. Villain! quit *my* house, then. This farm is mine: and you and yours shall depart from under its roof, before the sun has set to-morrow. (BENSON *sinks into a chair in centre, and covers his face with his hands.*)

Sestet and Chorus.

LUCY—ROSE—EDMUNDS—SQUIRE NORTON—FLAM—YOUNG BENSON—*and Chorus.*

YOUNG BENSON. Turn him from the farm! From his home will you cast
The old man who has till'd it for years?
Every tree, every flower, is link'd with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears.
Turn *him* from the farm! O'er its grassy hillside,
A gay boy he once loved to range;
His boyhood has fled, and its dear friends are dead,
But these meadows have never known change.

EDMUNDS. Oppressor, hear me.

LUCY. On my knees I implore!

SQUIRE. I command it, and you will obey.

ROSE. Rise, dear Lucy, rise; you shall not kneel before
The tyrant who drives us away.

SQUIRE. Your sorrows are useless, your prayers are in vain;
I command it and you will begone.
I'll hear no more.

EDMUNDS. No, they shall not beg again,
Of a man whom I view with deep scorn.

FLAM. Do not yield.

YOUNG BENSON.
SQUIRE.
LUCY.
ROSE. } Leave the farm!

EDMUNDS. Your power I despise.

SQUIRE. And your threats, boy, I disregard, too.

FLAM. Do not yield.

YOUNG BENSON.
SQUIRE.
LUCY
ROSE. } Leave the farm!

ROSE. If he leaves it, he dies.

EDMUNDS. This base act, proud man, you shall rue.

YOUNG BENSON. Turn him from the farm! From his home will you cast
The old man who has till'd it for years?
Every tree, every flower, is link'd with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears!

SQUIRE. Yes, yes, leave the farm! From his home I will cast
The old man who has till'd it for years;
Though each tree and flower is link'd with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears.

Chorus.

He has turned from his farm, from his home he has cast
The old man who has till'd it for years;
Though each tree and flower is link'd with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Hall. A breakfast-table, with urn and tea-service. A Livery Servant arranging it.* FLAM, *in a morning gown and slippers, reclining on the sofa.*

FLAM. Is the Squire out of bed yet?

SERVANT. Yes, sir, he will be down directly.

FLAM. Any letters from London?

SERVANT. One for your honour, that the man brought over from the market-town, this morning.

FLAM. Give it me, blockhead! (*Servant gives it, and exit.*) Never like the look of a great official-folded letter, with a large seal, "it's always an unpleasant one. Talk of discovering a man's character from his handwriting! —I'll back myself against any odds to form a very close guess at the contents of a letter from the form into which it is folded. This, now, I should say, is a decidedly hostile fold." Let us see—"King's Bench Walk —September 1st, 1729. Sir, I am instructed by my client, Mr. Edward Montague, to apply to you—(the old story—for the immediate payment, I suppose—what's this?)—to apply to you for the instant restitution or the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, his son lost to you at play; and to accquaint you, that unless it is immediately forwarded to my office, as above, the circumstances of the transaction will be made known; and the unfair and fraudulent means by which you deprived the young man of his money, publicly advertised.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, John Ellis." The devil! "who would believe now, that such a trifling circumstance as the mere insinuation of a small piece of gold into the corner of two dice would influence a man's destiny!" What's to be done? If, by some dextrous stroke, I could manage to curry favour with Norton, and procure some handsome present in return for services rendered—for, "work and labour done and performed," as my obedient servant, John Ellis, would say, I might keep my head above water yet. I have it! He shall have a joyful surprise. I'll carry this girl off for him, and he shall know nothing of the enterprise

until it is completed, or at least till she is fairly off. I have been well rewarded for similar services before, and may securely calculate on his gratitude in the present instance. He is here. (*Puts up the letter.*)

Enter SQUIRE NORTON.

SQUIRE (*seating himself at table*). Has any application for permission to remain on the farm been made from Benson, this morning, Flam?

FLAM. None.

SQUIRE. I am very sorry for it, although I admire the old man's independent spirit. I am very sorry for it. Wrong as I know I have been, I would rather that the first concession came from him.

FLAM. Concession!

SQUIRE. The more I reflect upon the occurrences of yesterday, Flam, the more I regret that, under the influence of momentary passion and excitement, I should have used so uncalled-for a threat against my father's oldest tenant. It is an act of baseness to which I look back with abhorrence.

FLAM (*aside*). What weathercock morality is this!

SQUIRE. It was unnecessary violence.

FLAM. Unnecessary! Oh, certainly; no doubt you could have attained your object without it, and can still. There is no occasion to punish the old man.

SQUIRE. Nor will I. He shall not leave the farm, if I myself implore, and beg him to remain.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Two young women to speak with your honour.

Enter LUCY *and* ROSE.

SQUIRE. Lucy!

FLAM (*aside*). She must be carried off to-night, or she certainly will save me the trouble, and I shall lose the money.

LUCY. Your honour may be well surprised to see me here, after the events of yesterday. It has cost me no trifling struggle to take this step, but I hope my better feelings have at length prevailed, and conquered my pride and weakness. I wish to speak to your honour, with nobody by.

FLAM (*aside*). Nobody by! I rather suspect I'm not particularly wanted here. (*To them.*) Pray allow us to retire for a few moments. Rose, my dear.

ROSE. Well!

FLAM. Come along.

LUCY. Rose will remain here. I brought her for that purpose.

FLAM. Bless me! that's very odd. As you please, of course, but I really think you'll find her very much in the way. (*Aside.*) Acting propriety! So much the better for my purpose; a little coyness will enhance the value of the prize. [*Exit* FLAM.

LUCY. Mr. Norton, I come here to throw myself upon your honourable feelings, as a man and as a gentleman. Oh, sir! now that my eyes are opened to the misery into which I have plunged myself, by my own ingratitude and treachery, do not—do not add to it the reflection that I have driven my father in his old age from the house where he was born, and in which he hoped to have died.

SQUIRE. Be calm, Lucy; your father shall continue to hold the farm; the lease shall be renewed.

LUCY. I have more to say to your honour still, and what I have to add may even induce your honour to retract the promise you have just now made me.

SQUIRE. Lucy! what can you mean?

LUCY. Oh, sir! call me coquette, faithless, treacherous, deceitful, what you will; I deserve it all; but believe me, I speak the truth when I make the humiliating avowal. A weak, despicable vanity induced me to listen with a ready ear to your honour's addresses, and to cast away the best and noblest heart that ever woman won.

SQUIRE. Lucy, 'twas but last night you told me that your love for Edmunds had vanished into air; that you hated and despised him.

LUCY. I know it, sir, too well. He laid bare my own guilt, and showed me the ruin which impended over me. He spoke the truth. Your honour more than confirmed him.

SQUIRE (*after a pause*). Even the avowal you have just made, unexpected as it is, shall not disturb my resolution. Your father shall not leave the farm.

Quartet.

LUCY—ROSE—SQUIRE NORTON, *and afterwards* YOUNG BENSON.

SQUIRE. Hear me, when I swear that the farm is your own
Through all changes Fortune may make;
The base charge of falsehood I never have known;
This promise I never will break.

ROSE *and* LUCY. Hear him, when he swears that the farm is our own
Through all changes Fortune may make;
The base charge of falsehood he never has known;
This promise he never will break.

Enter YOUNG BENSON.

YOUNG BENSON. My sister here! Lucy! begone, I command.
SQUIRE. To your home I restore you again.
YOUNG BENSON. No boon I'll accept from that treacherous hand
As the price of my sister's fair fame.
SQUIRE. To your home!
YOUNG BENSON (*to* LUCY). Hence away!
LUCY. Brother dear, I obey.
SQUIRE. I restore.
YOUNG BENSON. Hence away!
YOUNG BENSON, ROSE, *and* LUCY. Let us leave.
LUCY. He swears it, dear brother.
SQUIRE. I swear it.
YOUNG BENSON. Away!
SQUIRE. I swear it.
YOUNG BENSON. You swear to deceive.
SQUIRE. Hear me, when I swear that the farm is your own
Through all changes Fortune may make.
LUCY *and* ROSE. Hear him when he swears that the farm is our own
Through all changes Fortune may make.
YOUNG BENSON. Hear him swear, hear him swear, that the farm is our own
Through all changes Fortune may make.

SQUIRE. The base charge of falsehood I never have known,
This promise I never will break.

LUCY *and* ROSE. The base charge of falsehood he never has known,
This promise he never will break.

YOUNG BENSON. The base charge of falsehood he often has known,
This promise he surely will break.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

Re-enter FLAM, *in a walking-dress.*

FLAM. The coast is clear at last. What on earth the conversation can have been, at which Rose *was* wanted, and I was not, I confess my inability to comprehend; but away with speculation, and now to business.—(*Rings.*)

Enter Servant.

Pen and ink.

SERVANT. Yes, sir. [*Exit Servant.*

FLAM (*solus*). Nearly all the tenantry will be assembled here at the ball to-night; and if the father of this rustic Dulcinea is reinstated in his farm, he and his people will no doubt be among the number. It will be easy enough to entice the girl into the garden, through the window opening on the lawn; a chaise can be waiting in the quiet lane at the side, and some trusty fellow can slip a hasty note into Norton's hands informing him of the flight, and naming the place at which he can join us. (*Re-enter Servant with pen, ink, taper, and two sheets of notepaper; he places them on the table and exit.*) I may as well reply to my friend Mr. John Ellis's obliging favour now, too, by promising that the money shall be forwarded in the course of three days' post. (*Takes the letter from his pocket and lays it on the table.*) Lie you there. First, for Norton's note.—"Dear Norton—knowing your wishes—seized the girl—no blame attach to you. Join us as soon as people have dispersed in search of her in all directions but the right one—fifteen miles off." (*Folds it ready for an envelope and lays it by the side of the other letter.*) Now for John Ellis. Why, what does the rascal mean by bringing but two sheets of paper? No matter: that affair will keep cool till to-morrow, when I have less

business on my hands, and more money in my pockets, I hope. (*Crumples the letter he has just written, hastily up, thrusts it into his pocket, and folds the wrong one in the envelope. As he is sealing it*

Enter MARTIN, *very cautiously.*

MARTIN (*peeping*). There he is, hatching some mysterious and diabolical plot. If I can only get to the bottom of these dreadful designs, I shall immortalise myself. What a lucky dog I am, to be such a successful gleaner of news, and such a confidential person into the bargain, as to be the first to hear that he wanted some trustworthy person. All comes of talking to everybody I meet, and drawing out everything they hear. Capital custom! He don't see me. Hem! (*Coughs very loud, and when* FLAM *looks round, nods familiarly.*) How are you again?

FLAM. How am I again! Who the devil are you?—and what do you want here?

MARTIN. Hush!

FLAM. Eh?

MARTIN. Hush! I'm the man.

FLAM. *The* man!

MARTIN. Yes, the man that you asked the ostler at the George to recommend you; the trustworthy man that knows all the by-roads well, and can keep a secret; the man that you wanted to lend you a hand in a job that——

FLAM. Hush, hush!

MARTIN. Oh! you're beginning to hush now, are you?

FLAM. Haven't I seen your face before?

MARTIN. To be sure you have. You recollect admiring my manners at Benson's yesterday. You must remember Mr. Martin Stokes. You *can't* have forgotten him —not possible!

FLAM (*aside*). A friend of Benson!—a dangerous rencontre. Another moment and our conversation might have taken an awkward turn. (*To him.*) So you are Stokes, eh? Benson's friend Stokes?

MARTIN. To be sure. Ha, ha! I knew you couldn't have forgotten me. Pleasant Stokes they call me, clever Stokes sometimes; but that's flattery.

FLAM. No, surely.

MARTIN. Yes, 'pon my life! it is. Can't bear flattery—don't like it at all.

FLAM. Well, Mr. Stokes——

MARTIN (*aside*). Now for the secret.

FLAM. I am very sorry you have had the trouble of coming up here, Mr. Stokes, because I have changed my plan, and shall not require your valuable services. (*Goes up to the table.*)

MARTIN (*aside*). Something wrong here: try him again. You're sure you don't want me?

FLAM. Quite.

MARTIN. That's unlucky, because, as I have quarrelled with Benson——

FLAM. Quarrelled with Benson!

MARTIN. What! didn't you know that?

FLAM. Never heard of it. Now I think of it, Mr. Stokes, I *shall* want your assistance. Pray, sit down, Mr. Stokes.

MARTIN. With pleasure. (*They sit.*) I say, I *thought* you wanted me.

FLAM. Ah! you're a sharp fellow.

MARTIN. You don't mean that?

FLAM. I do, indeed.

MARTIN (*aside*). You would, if you knew all.

FLAM (*aside*). Conceited hound!

MARTIN (*aside*). Poor devil!

FLAM. Mr. Stokes, I needn't impress upon a gentleman of your intelligence, the necessity of secrecy in this matter.

MARTIN. Of course not: see all—say nothing. Capital custom—(*aside*) not mine though. Go on.

FLAM. You wouldn't mind playing Benson a trick—just a harmless trick?

"MARTIN. Certainly not. Go on.

"FLAM. I'll trust you.

"MARTIN. So you may. Go on."

FLAM. A chaise and four will be waiting to-night, at ten o'clock precisely, at the little gate that opens from the garden into the lane.

"MARTIN. No: will it though? Go on."

FLAM. "Don't interrupt me, Stokes." Into that chaise you must assist me in forcing as quickly as possible and without noise——

"MARTIN. Yes. Go on.
"FLAM. Whom do you think?
"MARTIN. Don't know."
FLAM. Can't you guess whom?
MARTIN. No.
FLAM. Try.
MARTIN. Eh! what!—Miss——
FLAM. Hush, hush! You understand me, I see. Not another word; not another syllable.
MARTIN. But do you really mean to run away with——
FLAM (*stopping his mouth*). You understand me—that's quite sufficient.
MARTIN (*aside*). He's going to run away with Rose. Why, if I hadn't found this out, John Maddox—one of my most particular friends—would have gone stark, staring, raving mad with grief. (*To him*). But what will become of Miss Lucy when she has lost Rose?
FLAM. No matter. We cannot take them both, without the certainty of immediate discovery. "Meet me at the corner of the avenue, before the ball commences, and I will communicate any further instructions I may have to give you. Meanwhile" take this (*gives him money*) as an earnest of what you shall receive when the girl is secured. Remember, silence and secrecy.
MARTIN. Silence and secrecy (*exit* FLAM)—confidence and two guineas. I am perfectly bewildered with this tremendous secret. What shall I do? Where shall I go?—To my particular friend, old Benson, or young Benson, or George Edmunds? or—no; I'll go and paralyse my particular friend, John Maddox. Not a moment is to be lost. I am all in a flutter. Run away with Rose! I suppose he'll run away with Lucy next. *I* shouldn't wonder. Run away with Rose! I never did—— [*Exit hastily.*

SCENE II.—*An open spot in the Village.*

Enter SQUIRE NORTON.

SQUIRE. My mind is made up. This girl has opened her whole heart to me; and it would be worse than villainy to pursue her further. I will seek out Benson and Edmunds, and endeavour to repair the mischief my

folly has occasioned. I have sought happiness in the dissipation of crowded cities, in vain. A country life offers health and cheerfulness; and a country life shall henceforth be mine, in all seasons.

Song.—Squire Norton.

There's a charm in Spring, when everything
Is bursting from the ground;
When pleasant showers bring forth the flowers,
And all is life around.

In summer day, the fragrant hay,
Most sweetly scents the breeze;
And all is still, save murmuring rill,
Or sound of humming bees.

Old Autumn come, with trusty gun
In quest of birds we roam:
Unerring aim, we mark the game,
And proudly bear it home.

A winter's night has its delight,
Well warm'd to bed we go;
A winter's day, we're blithe and gay.
Snipe-shooting in the snow.

A country life without the strife
And noisy din of town,
Is all I need, I take no heed
Of splendour or renown.

And when I die, oh, let me lie
Where trees above me wave;
Let wild plants bloom, around my tomb,
My quiet country grave! [*Exit.*

Scene III.—*The Rick-yard. Same as* Act I. Scene I.

Edmunds *and* Maddox *meeting.*

John. Ah, George! Why this is kind to come down to the old farm to-day, and take one peep at us, before we leave it forever. I suppose it's fancy, now, George, but to my thinking I never saw the hedges look so fresh, the fields so rich, or the old house so pretty and com-

fortable, as they do this morning. It's fancy that, George—an't it?

EDMUNDS. It's a place you may well be fond of, and attached to, for it's the prettiest spot in all the country round.

JOHN. Ah! you always enter into my feelings; and speaking of that, I want to ask your advice about Rose. I meant to come up to you to-day, on purpose. Do you think she is fond of me, George?

EDMUNDS (*smiling*). What do *you* think? She has not shown any desperate warmth of affection, of late, has she?

JOHN. No—no, she certainly has not, but she used to once; and the girl has got a good heart after all; and she came crying to me, this morning, in the little paddock, and somehow or other, my heart melted towards her, and—and—there's something very pleasant about her manner—isn't there, George?

EDMUNDS. No doubt of it, as other people besides ourselves would appear to think.

JOHN. You mean Mr. Flam? (EDMUNDS *nods assent.*) Ah! it's a bad business, altogether; but still there are some excuses to be made for a young country girl, who has never seen a town gentleman before, and can't be expected to know as well as you and I, George, what the real worth of one is. However, that may be, Rose came into the little paddock this morning, as I was standing there, looking at the young colts, and thinking of all our misfortunes; and first of all she walked by me, and then she stopped at a little distance, and then she walked back and stopped again; and I heard her sobbing as if her heart would burst: and then she came a little nearer, and at last she laid her hand upon my arm, and looked up in my face: and the tears started into my eyes, George, and I couldn't bear it any longer, for I thought of the many pleasant days we had been happy together, and it hurt me to think that she should have ever done anything to make her afraid of me, or me unkind to her.

EDMUNDS. You're a good fellow, John, an excellent fellow. Take her; I believe her to have an excellent disposition, though it is a little disguised by girlish levity sometimes; you may safely take her—if she had far

less good feeling than she actually possesses, she could never abuse your kind and affectionate nature.

JOHN. Is that your advice? Give me your hand, George (*they shake hands*), I will take her. You shall dance at our wedding, and I don't quite despair yet of dancing at yours, at the same time.

EDMUNDS. At mine! Where is the old man? I came here to offer him the little cottage in the village, which belongs to me. There is no tenant in it now: it has a pretty garden, of which I know he is fond, and it may serve his turn till he has had time to look about him.

JOHN. He is somewhere about the farm; walk with me across the yard, and perhaps we may meet him—this way. [*Exeunt.*

Enter YOUNG BENSON.

YOUNG BENSON. The worst portion of the poor old man's hard trial is past. I have lingered with him in every field on the land, and wandered through every room in the old house. I can neither blame his grief, nor console him in his affliction, for the farm has been the happy scene of my birth and boyhood; and I feel, in looking on it, for the last time, as if I were leaving the dearest friends of my youth for ever.

Song.—YOUNG BENSON.

My fair home is no longer mine;
From its roof-tree I'm driven away,
Alas! who will tend the old vine,
Which I planted in infancy's day!
The garden, the beautiful flowers,
The oak with its branches on high,
Dear friends of my happiest hours,
Among ye, I long hoped to die.
The briar, the moss, and the bramble,
Along the green paths will run wild;
The paths where I once used to ramble,
An innocent, light-hearted child.

At the conclusion of the song enter to the symphony OLD BENSON, *with* LUCY *and* ROSE.

YOUNG BENSON (*advancing to meet him*). Come, father, come!

OLD BENSON. I am ready, boy. We have but to walk a few steps, and the pang of leaving is over. Come, Rose, bring on that unhappy girl; come!

As they are going, enter the SQUIRE, *who meets them.*

SQUIRE. I am in time.

BENSON (*to* YOUNG BENSON, *who is advancing*). Harry, stand back. Mr. Norton, if by this visit you intend to mock the misery you have inflicted here, it is a heartless insult that might have been spared.

SQUIRE. You do me an injustice, Benson. I come here —not to insult your grief, but to entreat, implore you, to remain. The lease of this farm shall be renewed— I beseech you to remain here.

BENSON. It is not the quitting even the home of my infancy, which most men love, that bows my spirit down to-day. Here, in this old house, for near two hundred years, my ancestors have lived and died, and left their names behind them free from spot or blemish. I am the first to cross its threshold with the brand of infamy upon me. Would to God I had been borne from its porch a senseless corpse many weary years ago, so that I had been spared this hard calamity! You have moved an old man's weakness, but not with your revenge, sir. You implore me to remain here. I spurn your offer. *Here!* A father yielding to the destroyer of his child's good name and honour! Say no more, sir. Let me pass.

Enter, behind, STOKES *and* EDMUNDS.

SQUIRE. Benson, you are guilty of the foulest injustice, not to me, but to your daughter. After her fearless confession to me this morning of her love for Edmunds, and her abhorrence of my professions, I honour her too much to injure her or you.

LUCY. Dear father, it is true indeed. The noble behaviour of his honour to me, this morning, I can never forget, or be too grateful for.

BENSON. Thank God! thank God! I can look upon her once again. My child! my own child! (*he embraces her with great emotion.*) I have done your honour wrong, and I hope you'll forgive me. (*They shake hands.*)

MARTIN (*running forward*). So have I! so have I! I have done his honour wrong, and I hope he'll forgive me, too. You don't leave the farm, then? Hurrah! (*A man carrying a pail, some harness, etc., crosses the stage.*) Hallo, young fellow! go back, go back! don't take another thing away, and bring back all you have carried off; they are going to stop in the farm. Hallo! you fellows! (*Calling off.*) Leave the barn alone, and put everything in its place. They are going to stop on the farm. [*Exit bawling.*

BENSON (*seeing* EDMUNDS). What! George here, and turning away from his old friend, too, without a look of congratulation or a shake of the hand, just at the time, when of all others, he had the best right to expect it! For shame, George, for shame!

EDMUNDS. My errand here is rendered useless. By accident, and not intentionally, I partly overheard just now the nature of the avowal made by your daughter to Mr. Norton this morning.

BENSON. You believe it, George. You cannot doubt it's truth.

EDMUNDS. I *do* believe it. But I have been hurt, slighted, set aside for another. My honest love has been despised; my affection has been remembered, only to be tried almost beyond endurance. Lucy, all this from *you* I freely forgive. Be what you have been once, and what you may so well become again. Be the high-souled woman; not the light and thoughtless trifler that disgraces the name. Let me see you this, and you are mine again. Let me see you what you have been of late, and I never can be yours!

BENSON. Lead her in, Rose. Come, dear, come! (*The* BENSONS *and* ROSE *lead her slowly away.*)

EDMUNDS. Mr. Norton, if this altered conduct be sincere, it deserves a much better return than my poor thanks can ever be to you. If it be feigned, to serve some purposes of your own, the consequences will be upon your head.

SQUIRE. And I shall be prepared to meet them.

Duet.—SQUIRE NORTON *and* EDMUNDS.

SQUIRE. Listen, though I do not fear you,
Listen to me, ere we part.

EDMUNDS. List to *you!* Yes, I will hear you.

SQUIRE. Yours alone is Lucy's heart,
I swear it, by that Heaven above me.

EDMUNDS. What! can I believe my ears!
Could I hope that she still loves me!

SQUIRE. Banish all these doubts and fears,
If a love were e'er worth gaining,
If love were ever fond and true,
No disguise or passion feigning,
Such is her young love for you.

Listen, though I do not fear you,
Listen to me ere we part.

EDMUNDS. List to you! yes, I will hear you,
Mine alone is her young heart.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV.—*The avenue leading to the Hall by moonlight. The house in the distance, gaily illuminated.*

Enter FLAM *and* MARTIN.

FLAM. You have got the letter I gave you for the Squire?

MARTIN. All right. Here it is.

FLAM. The moment you see me leave the room, slip it into the Squire's hand; you can easily do so, without being recognised, in the confusion of the dance, and then follow me. You perfectly understand your instructions?

MARTIN. Oh, yes—I understand them well enough.

FLAM. There's nothing more, then, that you want to know?

MARTIN. No, nothing—oh, yes there is. I want to know whether—whether——

FLAM. Well, go on.

MARTIN. Whether you could conveniently manage to let me have another couple of guineas, before you go away in the chaise. Payment beforehand—capital custom. And if you don't, perhaps I may not get them at all, you know: (*aside*) seeing that I don't intend to go at all, I think it's very likely.

FLAM. You're a remarkably pleasant fellow, Stokes, in general conversation—very—but when you descend into

particularities, you become excessively prosy. On some points—money-matters for instance—you have a very grasping imagination, and seem disposed to dilate upon them at too great a length. You must cure yourself of this habit—you must indeed. Good-bye, Stokes; you shall have the two guineas doubled when the journey is completed. Remember—ten o'clock.

[*Exit* FLAM.

MARTIN. I shan't forget ten o'clock, depend upon it. Now to burst upon my particular friend, Mr. John Maddox, with the awful disclosure. He must pass this way on his road to the Hall. Here they come—don't see him though. (*Groups of male and female Villagers in cloaks, etc., cross the stage on their way to the Hall.*)

MARTIN. How are you, Tom? How do, Will?

VILLAGERS. How do, Mas'r Stokes?

MARTIN (*shaking hands with them*). How do, Susan? Mind, Cary, you're my first partner. Always kiss your first partner—capital custom. (*Kisses her.*) Good-bye! See you up at the Hall.

VILLAGERS. Ay, ay, Mas'r Stokes. [*Exeunt Villagers.*

MARTIN. Not among them. (*More Villagers cross.*) Nor them. Here he comes—Rose with him, too—innocent little victim, little thinking of the atrocious designs that are going on against her!

Enter MADDOX *and* ROSE, *arm-in-arm.*

JOHN. Ha, ha, ha! that was a good 'un, wasn't it? Ah! Martin, I wish I'd seen you a minute ago. I made such a joke! How you would ha' laughed!

MARTIN (*mysteriously beckoning* MADDOX *away from* ROSE, *and whispering*). I want to speak to you.

JOHN (*whispering*). What about?

ROSE. Lor'! don't stand whispering there, John. If you have anything to say, Mr. Stokes, say it before me.

JOHN (*taking her arm*). Ah! say it before her! Don't mind her, Martin; she's to be my wife, you know, and we're to be on the mutual-confidence principle; an't we, Rose?

ROSE. To be sure. Why don't you speak, Mr. Stokes? I suppose it's the old story—something wrong.

MARTIN. Something wrong! I rather think there is; and you little know what it is, or you wouldn't look so merry.

What I have got to say—don't be frightened, Miss Rose —relates to—don't alarm yourself, Master Maddox.

JOHN. I an't alarming myself; you're alarming me. Go on!

ROSE. Go on!—can't you?

MARTIN. Relates to Mr. Flam.

JOHN (*dropping* ROSE's *arm*). Mr. Flam!

MARTIN. Hush!—and Miss Rose.

ROSE. Me! Me and Mr. Flam!

MARTIN. Mr. Flam intends at ten o'clock, this very night —don't be frightened, Miss—by force, in secret, and in a chaise and four, too—to carry off, against her will, and elope with, Miss Rose.

ROSE. Me! Oh! (*Screams, and falls into the arms of* MADDOX.)

JOHN. Rub her hands, Martin, she's going off into a fit.

MARTIN. Never mind; she'd better go off in a fit than a chaise.

ROSE (*recovering*). Oh, John! don't let me go.

JOHN. Let you go!—not if I set the whole Hall on fire.

ROSE. Hold me fast, John.

JOHN. I'll hold you fast enough, depend upon it.

ROSE. Come on the other side of me, Mr. Stokes: take my arm; hold me tight, Mr. Stokes.

MARTIN. Don't be frightened, I'll take care of you. (*Takes her arm.*)

ROSE. Oh! Mr. Stokes.

MARTIN. Oh, indeed! Nothing wrong—eh?

ROSE. Oh! Mr. Stokes—pray forgive my having doubted that there was——Oh! what a dreadful thing! What is to be done with me?

MARTIN. Upon my word, I don't know. I think we had better shut her up in some place under ground—hadn't we, John?—or, stay—suppose we borrow the keys of the family vault, and lock her up there for an hour or two.

JOHN. Capital!

ROSE. Lor'! surely you may find out some more agreeable place than that, John.

MARTIN. I have it—I'm to carry her off.

BOTH. You!

MARTIN. Me—don't be afraid of me—all my management. You dance with her all the evening, and I'll keep close to

you. If anybody tries to get her away, you knock him down—and I'll help you.

JOHN. That's the plan—come along.

ROSE. Oh, I am so frightened! Hold me fast, Mr. Stokes —don't let me go, John. [*Exeunt, talking.*

Enter LUCY.

LUCY. Light-hearted revellers! how I envy them! How painful is my situation—obliged with a sad heart to attend a festivity, from which the only person I would care to meet will, I know, be absent. "But I will not complain. He shall see that I can become worthy of him, once again. I have lingered here so long, watching the soft shades of evening as they closed around me, that I cannot bear the thought of exchanging this beautiful scene for the noise and glare of a crowded room."

Song.—LUCY.

How beautiful at even-tide
To see the twilight shadows pale,
Steal o'er the landscape, far and wide,
O'er stream and meadow, mound and dale.
How soft is Nature's calm repose
When evening skies their cool dews weep:
The gentlest wind more gently blows,
As if to soothe her in her sleep!
The gay morn breaks,
Mists roll away,
All nature awakes
To glorious day.
In my breast alone
Dark shadows remain;
The peace it has known
It can never regain.

SCENE THE LAST.—*A spacious ball-room, brilliantly illuminated. A window at the end, through which is seen a moonlit landscape. A large concourse of country people, discovered.—The* SQUIRE—FLAM—*the* BENSONS—LUCY—ROSE—MARTIN, *and* MADDOX.

SQUIRE. Welcome, friends, welcome all! Come, choose your partners, and begin the dance.

FLAM (*to Lucy*). Your hand, for the dance?

LUCY. Pray excuse me, sir; I am not well. My head is oppressed and giddy. I would rather sit by the window which looks into the garden, and feel the cool evening air. (*She goes up. He follows her.*)

JOHN (*aside*). Stand by me, Martin. He's gone to order the chaise, perhaps.

ROSE. Oh! pray don't let me be taken away, Mr. Stokes.

MARTIN. Don't be frightened—don't be frightened. Mr. Flam is gone. I'll give the Squire the note in a minute.

SQUIRE. Now—begin the dance.

A Country Dance.

(MARTIN *and* MADDOX, *in their endeavours to keep close to* ROSE, *occasion great confusion. As the* SQUIRE *is looking at some particular couple in the dance,* MARTIN *steals behind him, thrusts the letter in his hands, and resumes his place. The* SQUIRE *looks round as if to discover the person who has delivered it; but being unsuccessful, puts it up, and retires among the crowd of dancers. Suddenly a violent scream is heard, and the dance abruptly ceases. Great confusion.* MARTIN *and* MADDOX *hold* ROSE *firmly.*)

SQUIRE. What has happened? Whence did that scream proceed?

SEVERAL VOICES. From the garden!—from the garden!

EDMUNDS (*without*). Raise him, and bring him here. Lucy—dear Lucy!

BENSON. Lucy! My child! (*Runs up the stage, and exit into garden.*)

MARTIN. *His* child! Damme! they can't get this one, so they're going to run away with the other. Here's some mistake here. Let me go, Rose. Come along, John. Make way there—make way!

(*As they run towards the window,* EDMUNDS *appears at it, without a hat, and his dress disordered, with* LUCY *in his arms. He delivers her to her father and* ROSE.)

ROSE. Lucy—dear Lucy—look up!

BENSON. Is she hurt, George?—is the poor child injured?

EDMUNDS. No, it is nothing but terror; she will be better instantly. See! she is recovering now. (LUCY *gradually recovers, as* FLAM, *his clothes torn, and face disfigured, is led in by* MADDOX *and* MARTIN.)

BENSON. Mr. Norton, this is an act of perjury and baseness, of which another instant would have witnessed the completion.

SQUIRE (*to* FLAM). Rascal! this is your deed.

FLAM (*aside to* NORTON). That's right, Norton, keep it up.

SQUIRE. Do not address me with your odious familiarity, scoundrel!

FLAM. You don't really mean to give me up?

SQUIRE. I renounce you from this instant.

FLAM. You do?—then take the consequences.

SQUIRE. Benson—Edmunds—friends—I declare to you most solemnly that I had neither hand nor part in this disgraceful outrage. It has been perpetrated without my knowledge, wholly by that scoundrel.

FLAM. 'Tis false; it was done with his consent. He has in his pocket, at this moment, a letter from me, acquainting him with my intention.

ALL. A letter!

SQUIRE. A letter *was* put into my hands five minutes since, but it acquainted me, not with this fellow's intentions, but with his real dishonourable and disgraceful character, to which I had hitherto been a stranger. (*To* FLAM.) Do you know that handwriting, sir? (*Showing him the letter.*)

FLAM. Ellis's letter! (*searching his pockets, and producing the other*). I must—ass that I was!—I did—enclose the wrong one.

SQUIRE. You will quit my house this instant; its roof shall not shelter you another night. Take that with you, sir, and begone. (*Throws him a purse.*)

FLAM (*taking it up*). Ah! I suppose you think this munificent, now—eh? I could have made twice as much of you in London, Norton, I could indeed, to say nothing of my exhibiting myself for a whole week to these clods of earth, which would have been cheap, dirt-cheap, at double the money. Bye-bye, Norton! Farewell, grubs! [*Exit.*

SQUIRE. Edmunds, you have rescued your future wife from brutal violence; you will not leave her exposed to similar attempts in future?

EDMUNDS. Even if I would, I feel, now that I have preserved her, that I could not.

SQUIRE. Then take her, and with her the old farm, which

from henceforth is your own. *You* will not turn the old man out, I suppose?

EDMUNDS (*shaking* BENSON *by the hand*). I don't think we are very likely to quarrel on that score; and most gratefully do we acknowledge your honour's kindness. Maddox!

JOHN. Hallo!

EDMUNDS. I shall not want that cottage and garden we were speaking of, this morning, now. Let me imitate a good example, and bestow it on *your* wife, as *her* marriage portion.

ROSE. Oh, delightful! Say certainly, John—can't you?

JOHN. Thank'ee, George, thank'ee! I say, Martin, I have arrived at the dignity of a cottage and a piece of ground, at last.

MARTIN. Yes, you may henceforth consider yourself on a level with me.

SQUIRE. Resume the dance.

MARTIN. I beg your pardon. One word. (*Whispers the* SQUIRE.)

SQUIRE. I hope not. Recollect, you have been mistaken before, to-day. You had better inquire.

MARTIN. I will. (*To the audience.*) My very particular friend, if he will allow me to call him so——

SQUIRE. Oh, certainly.

MARTIN. My very particular friend, Mr. Norton, wishes me to ask my other particular friends here, whether there's—anything wrong? We are delighted to hear your approving opinion in the old way. You *can't* do better. It's a capital custom.

Dance and Finale.—Chorus.

Join the dance, with step as light
As every heart should be to-night;
Music, shake the lofty dome,
In honour of our harvest-home.

Join the dance, and banish care,
All are young, and gay, and fair;
Even age has youthful grown,
In honour of our harvest-home.

Join the dance, bright faces beam,
Sweet lips smile, and dark eyes gleam;

All these charms have hither come,
In honour of our harvest-home.

Join the dance, with step as light,
As every heart should be to-night;
Music, shake the lofty dome,
In honour of our harvest-home.

Quintet.

LUCY—ROSE—EDMUNDS—*The* SQUIRE—YOUNG BENSON.

No light bound
Of stag or timid hare,
O'er the ground
Where startled herds repair,
Do we prize
So high, or hold so dear,
As the eyes
That light our pleasures here.

No cool breeze
That gently plays by night,
O'er calm seas,
Whose waters glisten bright;
No soft moan
That sighs across the lea,
Harvest-home,
Is half so sweet as thee!

Chorus.

Hail to the merry Autumn days, when yellow cornfields shine,
Far brighter than the costly cup that holds the monarch's wine!
Hail to the merry harvest time, the gayest of the year,
The time of rich and bounteous crops, rejoicing, and good cheer!

Hail! Hail! Hail!

CURTAIN.

THE LAMPLIGHTER

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

[1838]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Stargazer.

Master Galileo Isaac Newton Flamstead Stargazer (*his son*).

Tom Grig (*the Lamplighter*).

Mr. Mooney (*an Astrologer*).

Servant.

Betsy Martin.

Emma Stargazer.

Fanny Brown.

THE LAMPLIGHTER.

SCENE I.—*The Street, outside of* MR. STARGAZER'S *house. Two street Lamp-posts in front.*

TOM GRIG (*with ladder and lantern, singing as he enters*).

Day has gone down o'er the Baltic's proud bil-ler;
Evening has sigh'd, alas! to the lone wil-ler;
Night hurries on, night hurries on, earth and ocean to kiv-ver;
Rise, gentle moon, rise, gentle moon, and guide me to my——

That ain't a rhyme, that ain't—kiv-ver and lover! I ain't much of a poet; but if I couldn't make better verse than that, I'd undertake to be set fire to, and put up, instead of the lamp before Alderman Waithman's obstacle in Fleet Street. Bil-ler, wil-ler, kiv-ver—shiver, obviously. That's what *I* call poetry. (*Sings.*)

Day has gone down o'er the Baltic's proud bil-ler—

(*During the previous speech he has been occupied in lighting one of the lamps. As he is about to light the other,* MR. STARGAZER *appears at window, with a telescope.*)

MR. STARGAZER (*after spying most intently at the clouds*). Holloa!

TOM (*on ladder*). Sir, to you! And holloa again, if you come to that.

MR. STARGAZER. Have you seen the comet?

TOM. What comet—the Exeter Comet?

MR. STARGAZER. What comet? *The* comet—Halley's comet!

Tom. Nelson's, you mean. I saw it coming out of the yard, not five minutes ago.

Mr. Stargazer. Could you distinguish anything of a tail?

Tom. Distinguish a tail? I believe you—four tails!

Mr. Stargazer. A comet with four tails; and all visible to the naked eye! Nonsense! it couldn't be.

Tom. You wouldn't say that again if you was down here, old Bantam. (*Clock strikes five.*) You'll tell me next, I suppose, that that isn't five o'clock striking, eh?

Mr. Stargazer. Five o'clock—five o'clock! Five o'clock p.m. on the thirtieth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight! Stop till I come down—stop! Don't go away on any account—not a foot, not a step. (*Closes window.*)

Tom (*descending, and shouldering his ladder*). Stop! stop, to a lamplighter, with three hundred and seventy shops and a hundred and twenty private houses waiting to be set a light to! Stop, to a lamplighter!

As he is running off, enter Mr. Stargazer *from his house, hastily.*

Mr. Stargazer (*detaining him*). Not for your life!—not for your life! The thirtieth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight! Miraculous circumstance! extraordinary fulfilment of a prediction of the planets!

Tom. What are you talking about?

Mr. Stargazer (*looking about*). Is there nobody else in sight, up the street or down? No, not a soul! This, then, is the man whose coming was revealed to me by the stars, six months ago!

Tom. What do you mean?

Mr. Stargazer. Young man, that I have consulted the Book of Fate with rare and wonderful success—that coming events have cast their shadows before.

Tom. Don't talk nonsense to me—I ain't an event; I'm a lamplighter!

Mr. Stargazer (*aside*). True!—Strange destiny that one, announced by the planets as of noble birth, should be devoted to so humble an occupation. (*Aloud.*) But you were not *always* a lamplighter?

Tom. Why, no. I wasn't born with a ladder on my left

shoulder, and a light in my other hand. But I took to it very early, though—I had it from my uncle.

MR. STARGAZER (*aside*). He had it from his uncle! How plain, and yet how forcible is his language! He speaks of lamplighting, as though it were the whooping-cough or measles! (*To him.*) Ay!

TOM. Yes, he was the original. You should have known him!—'cod! he was a genius, if ever there was one. Gas was the death of him! When gas-lamps were first talked of, my uncle draws himself up, and says, "I'll not believe it, there's no sich a thing," he says. "You might as well talk of laying on an everlasting succession of glow-worms!" But when they made the experiment of lighting a piece of Pall Mall——

MR. STARGAZER. That was when it first came up?

TOM. No, no, that was when it was first laid down. Don't mind me; I can't help a joke, now and then. My uncle was sometimes took that way. When the experiment was made of lighting a piece of Pall Mall, and he had actually witnessed it with his own eyes, you should have seen my uncle then!

MR. STARGAZER. So much overcome?

TOM. Overcome, sir! He fell off his ladder, from weakness, fourteen times that very night; and his last fall was into a wheelbarrow that was going his way, and humanely took him home. "I foresee in this," he says, "the breaking up of our profession; no more polishing of the tin reflectors," he says; "no more fancy-work, in the way of clipping the cottons at two o'clock in the morning; no more going the rounds to trim by daylight, and dribbling down of the *ile* on the hats and bonnets of the ladies and gentlemen, when one feels in good spirits. Any low fellow can light a gas-lamp, and it's all up!" So he petitioned the Government for—what do you call that that they give to people when it's found out that they've never been of any use, and have been paid too much for doing nothing?

MR. STARGAZER. Compensation?

TOM. Yes, that's the thing—compensation. They didn't give him any, though! And then he got very fond of his country all at once, and went about, saying how that the bringing in of gas was a death-blow to his native land, and how that its *ile* and cotton trade was gone

for ever, and the whales would go and kill themselves, privately, in spite and vexation at not being caught! After this, he was right-down cracked, and called his 'bacco pipe a gas pipe, and thought his tears was lamp *ile*, and all manner of nonsense. At last, he went and hung himself on a lamp iron, in St. Martin's Lane, that he'd always been very fond of; and as he was a remarkably good husband, and had never had any secrets from his wife, he put a note in the twopenny post, as he went along, to tell the widder where the body was.

Mr. Stargazer (*laying his hand upon his arm, and speaking mysteriously*). Do you remember your parents?

Tom. My mother I do, very well!

Mr. Stargazer. Was she of noble birth?

Tom. Pretty well. She was in the mangling line. Her mother came of a highly respectable family—such a business, in the sweetstuff and hardbake way!

Mr. Stargazer. Perhaps your father was——

Tom. Why, I hardly know about him. The fact is, there was some little doubt, at the time, who *was* my father. Two or three young gentlemen were paid the pleasing compliment; but their incomes being limited, they were compelled delicately to decline it.

Mr. Stargazer. Then the prediction is not fulfilled merely in part, but entirely and completely. Listen, young man—I am acquainted with all the celestial bodies——

Tom. Are you, though?—I hope they are quite well—every body.

Mr. Stargazer. Don't interrupt me. I am versed in the great sciences of astronomy and astrology; in my house there I have every description of apparatus for observing the course and motion of the planets. I'm writing a work about them, which will consist of eighty-four volumes, imperial quarto; and an appendix, nearly twice as long. I read what's going to happen in the stars.

Tom. Read what's going to happen in the stars! Will anything particular happen in the stars in the course of next week, now?

Mr. Stargazer. You don't understand me. I read in the stars what's going to happen here. Six months ago I derived from this source the knowledge that, pre-

cisely as the clock struck five, on the afternoon of this very day, a stranger would present himself before my enraptured sight—that stranger would be a man of illustrious and high descent—that stranger would be the destined husband of my young and lovely niece, who is now beneath that roof (*points to his house*)—that stranger is yourself: I receive you with open arms!

TOM. Me! I, the man of illustrious and high—I, the husband of a young and lovely—Oh! it can't be, you know! the stars have made a mistake—the comet has put 'em out!

MR. STARGAZER. Impossible! The characters were as plain as pike-staves. The clock struck five; you were here; there was not a soul in sight; a mystery envelops your birth; you are a man of noble aspect. Does not everything combine to prove the accuracy of my observations?

TOM. Upon my word, it looks like it! And now I come to think of it, I have very often felt as if I wasn't the small beer I was taken for. And yet I don't know—you're quite sure about the noble aspect?

MR. STARGAZER. Positively certain.

TOM. Give me your hand.

MR. STARGAZER. And my heart, too! (*They shake hands heartily.*)

TOM. The young lady is tolerably good-looking, is she?

MR. STARGAZER. Beautiful! A graceful carriage, an exquisite shape, a sweet voice; a countenance beaming with animation and expression; the eye of a startled fawn.

TOM. I see; a sort of game eye. Does she happen to have any of the—this is quite between you and me, you know—and I only ask from curiosity—not because I care about it—any of the ready?

MR. STARGAZER. Five thousand pounds! But what of that? what of that? A word in your ear. I'm in search of the philosopher's stone! I have very nearly found it—not quite. It turns everything to gold; that's its property.

TOM. What a lot of property it must have.

MR. STARGAZER. When I get it, we'll keep it in the family. Not a word to any one! What will money be to us?

We shall never be able to spend it fast enough.

TOM. Well, you know, we can but try—I'll do my best endeavours.

MR. STARGAZER. Thank you—thank you! But I'll introduce you to your future bride at once: this way! this way!

TOM. What, without going my rounds first?

MR. STARGAZER. Certainly. A man in whom the planets take especial interest, and who is about to have a share in the philosopher's stone, descend to lamplighting!

TOM. Perish the base idea! not by no means! I'll take in my tools though, to prevent any kind inquiries after me, at your door. (*As he shoulders the ladder the sound of violent rain is heard.*) Holloa!

MR. STARGAZER (*putting his hand on his head in amazement*). What's that?

TOM. It's coming down, rather.

MR. STARGAZER. Rain!

TOM. Ah! and a soaker, too!

MR. STARGAZER. It can't be!—it's impossible!—(*Taking a book from his pocket, and turning over the pages hurriedly.*) Look here—here it is—here's the weather almanack—"Set fair"—I knew it couldn't be! (*with great triumph*).

TOM (*turning up his collar as the rain increases*). Don't you think there's a dampness in the atmosphere?

MR. STARGAZER (*looking up*). It's singular—it's *like* rain!

TOM. Uncommonly like.

MR. STARGAZER. It's a mistake in the elements, somehow. Here it is, "set fair"—and set fair it ought to be. "Light clouds floating about." Ah! you see, there are no light clouds; the weather's all wrong.

TOM. Don't you think we had better get under cover?

MR. STARGAZER (*slowly retreating towards the house*). I don't acknowledge that it has any right to rain, mind! I protest against this. If Nature goes on in this way, I shall lose all respect for her—it won't do, you know; it ought to have been two degrees colder, yesterday; and instead of that it was warmer. This is not the way to treat scientific men. I protest against it!

[*Exeunt into house, both talking,* TOM *pushing* STARGAZER *on, and the latter continually turning back, to declaim against the weather.*]

SCENE II.—*A room in* STARGAZER'S *house.* BETSY MARTIN, EMMA STARGAZER, FANNY BROWN, *and* GALILEO, *all murmuring together as they enter.*

BETSY. I say again, young ladies, that it's shameful! unbearable!

ALL. Oh! shameful! shameful!

BETSY. Marry Miss Emma to a great, old, ugly, doting, dreaming As-tron-o-Magician, like Mr. Mooney, who's always winking and blinking through telescopes and that, and can't see a pretty face when it's under his very nose!

GALILEO (*with a melancholy air*). There never was a pretty face under *his* nose, Betsy, leastways, since I've known him. He's very plain.

BETSY. Ah! there's poor young master, too; he hasn't even spirits enough left to laugh at his own jokes. I'm sure I pity him, from the very bottom of my heart.

FANNY *and* EMMA. Poor fellow!

GALILEO. Ain't I a legitimate subject for pity? Ain't it a dreadful thing that I, that am twenty-one come next Lady-day, should be treated like a little boy?—and all because my father is so busy with the moon's age that he don't care about mine; and so much occupied in making observations on the sun round which the earth revolves, that he takes no notice of the son that revolves round him! I wasn't taken out of nankeen frocks and trousers till I became quite unpleasant in 'em.

ALL. What a shame!

GALILEO. I wasn't, indeed. And look at me now! Here's a state of things. Is this a suit of clothes for a major—at least, for a gentleman who is a minor now, but will be a major on the very next Lady-day that comes? Is this a fit——

ALL (*interrupting him*). Certainly not!

GALILEO (*vehemently*). I won't stand it—I won't submit to it any longer. I *will* be married.

ALL. No, no, no! don't be rash.

GALILEO. I will, I tell you. I'll marry my cousin Fanny. Give me a kiss, Fanny; and Emma and Betsy will look the other way the while. (*Kisses her.*) There!

BETSY. Sir—sir! here's your father coming!

GALILEO. Well, then, I'll have another, as an antidote to my father. One more, Fanny. (*Kisses her.*)

MR. STARGAZER (*without*). This way! this way! You shall behold her immediately.

Enter MR. STARGAZER, TOM *following bashfully.*

MR. STARGAZER. Where is my——? Oh, here she is! Fanny, my dear, come here. Do you see that gentleman? (*Aside.*)

FANNY. What gentleman, uncle? Do you mean that elastic person yonder who is bowing with so much perseverance?

MR. STARGAZER. Hush! yes; that's the interesting stranger.

FANNY. Why, he is kissing his hand, uncle. What does the creature mean?

MR. STARGAZER. Ah, the rogue! Just like me, before I married your poor aunt—all fire and impatience. He means love, my darling, love. I've such a delightful surprise for you. I didn't tell you before, for fear there should be any mistake; but it's all right, it's all right. The stars have settled it all among 'em. He's to be your husband!

FANNY. My husband, uncle? Goodness gracious, Emma! (*Converses apart with her.*)

MR. STARGAZER (*aside*). He has made a sensation already. His noble aspect and distinguished air have produced an instantaneous impression. Mr. Grig, will you permit me? (TOM *advances awkwardly.*)—This is my niece, Mr. Grig—my niece, Miss Fanny Brown; my daughter, Emma—Mr. Thomas Grig, the favourite of the planets.

TOM. I hope I see Miss Hemmer in a convivial state? (*Aside to* MR. STARGAZER.) I say, I don't know which is which.

MR. STARGAZER (*aside*). The young lady nearest here is your affianced bride. Say something appropriate.

TOM. Certainly; yes, of course. Let me see. Miss (*crosses to her*)—I—thank'ee! (*Kisses her, behind his hat. She screams.*)

GALILEO (*bursting from* BETSY, *who has been retaining him*). Outrageous insolence! (BETSY *runs off.*)

MR. STARGAZER. Halloa, sir, halloa!

TOM. Who is this juvenile salamander, sir?

MR. STARGAZER. My little boy—only my little boy; don't mind him. Shake hands with the gentleman, sir, instantly (*to* GALILEO).

TOM. A very fine boy, indeed! and he does you great credit, sir. How d'ye do, my little man? (*They shake hands,* GALILEO *looking very wrathful, as* TOM *pats him on the head.*) There, that's very right and proper. "'Tis dogs delight to bark and bite"; not young gentlemen, you know. There, there!

MR. STARGAZER. Now let me introduce you to that *sanctum sanctorum*—that hallowed ground—that philosophical retreat—where I, the *genius loci*——

TOM. Eh?

MR. STARGAZER. The *genius loci*——

TOM (*aside*). Something to drink, perhaps. Oh, ah! yes, yes!

MR. STARGAZER. Have made all my greatest and most profound discoveries! where the telescope has almost grown to my eye with constant application; and the glass retort has been shivered to pieces from the ardour with which my experiments have been pursued. There the illustrious Mooney is, even now, pursuing those researches which will enrich us with precious metal, and make us masters of the world. Come, Mr. Grig.

TOM. By all means, sir; and luck to the illustrious Mooney, say I—not so much on Mooney's account as for our noble selves.

MR. STARGAZER. Emma!

EMMA. Yes, papa.

MR. STARGAZER. The same day that makes your cousin Mrs. Grig, will make you and that immortal man, of whom we have just now spoken, one.

EMMA. Oh! consider, dear papa——

MR. STARGAZER. You are unworthy of him, I know; but he—kind, generous creature—consents to overlook your defects, and to take you, for my sake—devoted man!—Come, Mr. Grig!—Galileo Isaac Newton Flamstead!

GALILEO. Well? (*Advancing sulkily.*)

MR. STARGAZER. In name, alas! but not in nature; knowing, even by sight, no other planets than the sun and moon—here is your weekly pocket-money—sixpence! Take it all!

TOM. And don't spend it all at once, my man! Now, sir!

MR. STARGAZER. Now, Mr. Grig—go first, sir, I beg!

[*Exeunt* TOM *and* MR. STARGAZER.

GALILEO. "Come, Mr. Grig!"—"Go first, Mr. Grig!"—"Day that makes your cousin Mrs. Grig!"—I'll secretly stick a penknife into Mr. Grig, if I live to be three hours older!

FANNY (*on one side of him*). Oh! don't talk in that desperate way—there's a dear, dear creature!

EMMA (*on the other side*). No! pray do not—it makes my blood run cold to hear you.

GALILEO. Oh! if I was of age!—if I was only of age!—or we could go to Gretna Green, at threepence a head, including refreshments and all incidental expenses. But that could never be! Oh! if I was only of age!

FANNY. But what if you were? What could you do then?

GALILEO. Marry you, cousin Fanny; I could marry you then lawfully, and without anybody's consent.

FANNY. You forget that, situated as we are, we could not be married, even if you *were* one-and-twenty—we have no money!

EMMA. Not even enough for the fees!

GALILEO. Oh! I am sure every Christian clergyman, under such afflicting circumstances, would marry us on credit. The wedding-fees might stand over till the first christening, and then we could settle the little bill altogether. Oh! why ain't I of age!—why ain't I of age?

Enter BETSY, *in haste.*

BETSY. Well! I never could have believed it! There, Miss! I wouldn't have believed it, if I had dreamt it, even with a bit of bride-cake under my pillow! To dare to go and think of marrying a young lady, with five thousand pounds, to a common lamplighter!

ALL. A lamplighter?

BETSY. Yes, he's Tom Grig the lamplighter, and nothing more nor less, and old Mr. Stargazer goes and picks him out of the open street, and brings him in for Miss Fanny's husband, because he pretends to have read something about it in the stars. Stuff and nonsense! I don't believe he knows his letters in the stars, and that's the truth; or, if he's got as far as words in one syllable, it's quite as much as he has.

FANNY. Was such an atrocity ever heard of? I, left with no power to marry without his consent, and he almost possessing the power to force my inclinations.

EMMA. It's actually worse than my being sacrificed to that odious and detestable Mr. Mooney.

BETSY. Come, Miss, it's not quite so bad as that neither; for Thomas Grig is a young man, and a proper young man enough, too, but as to Mr. Mooney—oh, dear! no husband is bad enough in my opinion, Miss; but he is worse than nothing—a great deal worse.

FANNY. You seem to speak feelingly about this same Mr. Grig.

BETSY. Oh, dear no, Miss, not I. I don't mean to say but what Mr. Grig may be very well in his way, Miss; but Mr. Grig and I have never held any communication together, not even so much as how-d'ye-do. Oh, no indeed, I have been very careful, Miss, as I always am with strangers. I was acquainted with the last lamplighter, Miss, but he's going to be married, and has given up the calling, for the young woman's parents being very respectable, wished her to marry a literary man, and so he has set up as a bill-sticker. Mr. Grig only came upon this beat at five to-night, Miss.

FANNY. Which is a very sufficient reason why you don't know more of him.

BETSY. Well, Miss, perhaps it is; and I hope there's no crime in making friends in this world, if we can, Miss.

FANNY. Certainly not. So far from it, that I most heartily wish you could make something more than a friend of this Mr. Grig, and so lead him to falsify this prediction.

GALILEO. Oh! don't you think you could, Betsy?

EMMA. You could not manage at the same time to get any young friend of yours to make something more than a friend of Mr. Mooney, could you, Betsy?

GALILEO. But, seriously, don't you think you could manage to give us all a helping hand together, in some way, eh, Betsy?

FANNY. Yes, yes, that would be so delightful. I should be grateful to her for ever. Shouldn't you?

EMMA. Oh, to the very end of my life!

GALILEO. And so should I, you know, and lor'! we should make her so rich, when—when we got rich ourselves —shouldn't we?

BOTH. Oh, that we should, of course.

BETSY. Let me see. I don't wish to have Mr. Grig to myself, you know. I don't want to be married.

All. No! no! no! Of course she don't.

Betsy. I haven't the least idea to put Mr. Grig off this match, you know, for anybody's sake, but you young people's. I am going quite *contrairy* to my own feelings, you know.

All. Oh, yes, yes! How kind she is!

Betsy. Well, I'll go over the matter with the young ladies in Miss Emma's room, and if we can think of anything that seems likely to help us, so much the better; and if we can't, we're none the worst. But Master Galileo mustn't come, for he is so horrid jealous of Miss Fanny that I dursn't hardly say anything before him. Why, I declare (*looking off*), there is my gentleman looking about him as if he had lost Mr. Stargazer, and now he turns this way. There—get out of sight. Make haste!

Galileo. I may see 'em as far as the bottom stair, mayn't I, Betsy?

Betsy. Yes, but not a step farther on any consideration. There, get away softly, so that if he passes here, he may find me alone. (*They creep gently out,* Galileo *returns and peeps in.*)

Galileo. Hist, Betsy!

Betsy. Go away, sir. What have you come back for?

Galileo (*holding out a large pin*). I wish you'd take an opportunity of sticking this a little way into him for patting me on the head just now.

Betsy. Nonsense, you can't afford to indulge in such expensive amusements as retaliation yet awhile. You must wait till you come into your property, sir. There, get you gone! [*Exit* Galileo.

Enter Tom Grig.

Tom (*aside*). I never saw such a scientific file in my days. The enterprising gentleman that drowned himself *to see how it felt,* is nothing to him. There he is, just gone down to the bottom of a dry well in an uncommonly small bucket, to take an extra squint at the stars, they being seen best, I suppose, through the medium of a cold in the head. Halloa! Here is a young female of attractive proportions. I wonder now whether a man of noble aspect would be justified in tickling her. (*He advances stealthily and tickles her under the arm.*)

BETSY (*starting*). Eh! what! Lor', sir!

TOM. Don't be alarmed. My intentions are strictly honourable. In other words, I have no intentions whatever.

BETSY. Then you ought to be more careful, Mr. Grig. That was a liberty, sir.

TOM. I know it was. The cause of liberty, all over the world—that's my sentiment! What is your name?

BETSY (*curtseying*). Betsy Martin, sir.

TOM. A name famous both in song and story. Would you have the goodness, Miss Martin, to direct me to that particular apartment wherein the illustrious Mooney is now pursuing his researches?

BETSY (*aside*). A little wholesome fear may not be amiss. (*To him, in assumed agitation.*) You are not going into *that* room, Mr. Grig?

TOM. Indeed, I am, and I ought to be there now, having promised to join that light of science, your master (a short six, by the bye!), outside the door.

BETSY. That dreadful and mysterious chamber! Another victim!

TOM. Victim, Miss Martin!

BETSY. Oh! the awful oath of secrecy which binds me not to disclose the perils of that gloomy, hideous room.

TOM (*astonished*). Miss Martin!

BETSY. Such a fine young man—so rosy and fresh-coloured, that he should fall into the clutches of that cruel and insatiable monster! I cannot continue to witness such frightful scenes: I must give warning.

TOM. If you have anything to unfold, young woman, have the goodness to give *me* warning at once.

BETSY (*affecting to recover herself*). No, no, Mr. Grig, it's nothing—it's ha! ha! ha!—don't mind me, don't mind me, but it certainly is very shocking—no—no—I don't mean that. I mean funny—yes. Ha! ha! ha!

TOM (*aside, regarding her attentively*). I suspect a trick here—some other lover in the case who wants to come over the stars; but it won't do. I'll tell you what, young woman (*to her*), if this is a cloak, you had better try it on elsewhere—in plain English, if you have any object to gain and think to gain it by frightening *me*, it's all my eye, and, and—yourself, Miss Martin.

BETSY. Well, then, if you will rush upon your fate—

there (*pointing off*)—that's the door at the end of that long passage and across the gravelled yard. The room is built away from the house on purpose.

TOM. I'll make for it at once, and the first object I inspect through that same telescope, which now and then grows to your master's eye, shall be the moon—the moon, which is the emblem of your inconstant and deceitful sex, Miss Martin.

Duet.

AIR—"*The Young May-moon.*"

TOM. There comes a new moon twelve times a year.
BETSY. And when there is none, all is dark and drear.
TOM. In which I espy–
BETSY. And so, too, do I—
BOTH. A resemblance to womankind very clear.
BOTH. There comes a new moon twelve times in a year;
And when there is none, all is dark and drear.
TOM. In which I espy—
BETSY. And so do I—
BOTH. A resemblance to womankind very clear.

Second Verse.

TOM. She changes, she's fickle, she drives men mad.
BETSY. She comes to bring light, and leaves them sad.
TOM. So restless wild—
BETSY. But so sweetly wild—
BOTH. That no better companion could be had.
BOTH. There comes a new moon twelve times a year;
And when there is none, all is dark and drear.
TOM. In which I espy—
BETSY. And so do I—
BOTH. A resemblance to womankind very clear.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A large gloomy room; a window with a telescope directed towards the sky without, a table covered with books, instruments and apparatus, which are also scattered about in other parts of the chamber, a dim lamp, a pair of globes, etc., a skeleton in a case, and various uncouth objects displayed against the walls. Two doors in flat.* MR. MOONEY *discovered, with a very dirty face, busily engaged in blowing a fire, upon which is a crucible.*

Enter MR. STARGAZER, *with a lamp, beckoning to* TOM GRIG, *who enters with some unwillingness.*

MR. STARGAZER. This, Mr. Grig, is the *sanctum sanctorum* of which I have already spoken; this is at once the laboratory and observatory.

TOM. It's not an over-lively place, is it?

MR. STARGAZER. It has an air of solemnity which well accords with the great and mysterious pursuits that are here in constant prosecution, Mr. Grig.

TOM. Ah! I should think it would suit an undertaker to the life; or perhaps I should rather say to the death. What may that cheerful object be now? (*Pointing to a large phial.*)

MR. STARGAZER. That contains a male infant with three heads—we use it in astrology—it is supposed to be a *charm.*

TOM. I shouldn't have supposed it myself, from his appearance. The young gentleman isn't alive, is he?

MR. STARGAZER. No, he is preserved in spirits. (MR. MOONEY *sneezes.*)

TOM (*retreating into a corner*). Halloa! What the—— (MR. MOONEY *looks vacantly round.*) That gentleman, I suppose, is out of spirits?

MR. STARGAZER (*laying his hand upon* TOM'S *arm and looking towards the philosopher*). Hush! that is the gifted Mooney. Mark well his noble countenance—intense thought beams from every lineament. That is the great astrologer.

TOM. He looks as if he had been having a touch at the black art. I say, why don't he say something?

MR. STARGAZER. He is in a state of abstraction; see, he directs his bellows this way, and blows upon the empty air.

TOM. Perhaps he sees a strange spark in this direction and wonders how he came here. I wish he'd blow me out. (*Aside.*) I don't half like this.

MR. STARGAZER. You shall see me rouse him.

TOM. Don't put yourself out of the way on my account; I can make his acquaintance at any other time.

MR. STARGAZER. No time like the time present. Nothing awakens him from these fits of meditation but an electric shock. We always have a strongly charged battery

on purpose. I'll give him a shock directly. (MR. STARGAZER *goes up and cautiously places the end of a wire in* MR. MOONEY'S *hand. He then stoops down beside the table as though bringing it in contact with the battery.* MR. MOONEY *immediately jumps up with a loud cry and throws away the bellows.*)

TOM (*squaring at the philosopher*). It wasn't me, you know —none of your nonsense.

MR. STARGAZER (*comes hastily forward*). Mr. Grig—Mr. Grig—not that disrespectful attitude to one of the greatest men that ever lived. This, my dear friend (*to* MOONEY), is the noble stranger.

MR. MOONEY. Aha!

MR. STARGAZER. Who arrived, punctual to his time, this afternoon.

MR. MOONEY. Oho!

MR. STARGAZER. Welcome him, my friend—give him your hand. (MR. MOONEY *appears confused and raises his leg.*) No—no, that's your foot. So absent, Mr. Grig, in his gigantic meditations that very often he doesn't know one from the other. Yes, that's your hand, very good, my dear friend, very good (*pats* MOONEY *on the back, as he and* TOM *shake hands, the latter at arm's length*).

MR. STARGAZER. Have you made any more discoveries during my absence?

MR. MOONEY. Nothing particular.

MR. STARGAZER. Do you think—do you think, my dear friend, that we shall arrive at any great stage in our labours, anything at all approaching to their final consummation in the course of the night?

MR. MOONEY. I cannot take upon myself to say.

MR. STARGAZER. What are your opinions upon the subject?

MR. MOONEY. I haven't any opinions upon any subject whatsoever.

MR. STARGAZER. Wonderful man! Here's a mind, Mr. Grig.

TOM. Yes, his conversation's very improving indeed. But what's he staring so hard at me for?

MR. STARGAZER. Something occurs to him. Don't speak —don't disturb the current of his reflections upon any account. (MR. MOONEY *walks solemnly up to* TOM, *who retreats before him; taking off his hat, turns it over and*

over with a thoughtful countenance and finally puts it upon his own head.)

MR. STARGAZER. Eccentric man!

TOM. I say, I hope he don't mean to keep that, because if he does, his eccentricity is unpleasant. Give him another shock and knock it off, will you.

MR. STARGAZER. Hush! hush! not a word. (MR. MOONEY, *keeping his eyes fixed on* TOM, *slowly returns to* MR. STARGAZER *and whispers in his ear.*)

MR. STARGAZER. Surely; by all means. I took the date of his birth, and all other information necessary for the purpose just now. (*To* TOM.) Mr. Mooney suggests that we should cast your nativity without delay, in order that we may communicate to you your future destiny.

MR. MOONEY. Let us retire for that purpose.

MR. STARGAZER. Certainly, wait here for a few moments Mr. Grig, we are only going into the little laboratory and will return immediately. Now, my illustrious friend. (*He takes up a lamp and leads the way to one of the doors. As* MR. MOONEY *follows,* TOM *steals behind him and regains his hat.* MR. MOONEY *turns round, stares, and exit through door.*)

TOM. Well, that's the queerest genius I ever came across —rather a singular person for a little smoking party. (*Looks into the crucible.*) This is the saucepan, I suppose, where they're boiling the philosopher's stone down to the proper consistency. I hope it's nearly done; when it's quite ready, I'll send out for sixpenn'orth of sprats, and turn 'em into gold fish for a first experiment. 'Cod! it'll be a comfortable thing though to have no end to one's riches. I'll have a country house and a park, and I'll plant a bit of it with a double row of gas-lamps a mile long, and go out with a French polished mahogany ladder, and two servants in livery behind me, to light 'em with my own hands every night. What's to be seen here? (*Looks through telescope.*) Nothing particular, the stopper being on at the other end. The little boy with three heads (*looking towards the case*). What a comfort he must have been to his parents!— Halloa! (*taking up a large knife*) this is a disagreeable-looking instrument—something too large for bread and cheese, or oysters, and not of a bad shape for sticking live persons in the ribs. A very dismal place this

—I wish they'd come back. Ah!—(*coming upon the skeleton*) here's a ghastly object—what does the writing say?—(*reads a label upon the case*) "Skeleton of a gentleman prepared by Mr. Mooney." I hope Mr. Mooney may not be in the habit of inviting gentlemen here, and making 'em into such preparations without their own consent. Here's a book, now. What's all this about, I wonder? The letters look as if a steam-engine had printed 'em by accident. (*Turns over the leaves, spelling to himself.*)

GALILEO *enters softly unseen by* TOM, *who has his back towards him.*

GALILEO (*aside*). Oh, you're there, are you? If I could but suffocate him, not for life, but only till I am one-and-twenty, and then revive him, what a comfort and convenience it would be! I overheard my cousin Fanny talking to Betsy about coming here. What can she want here? If she can be false—false to *me*—it seems impossible, but if she is?—well, well, we shall see. If I can reach that lumber-room unseen, Fanny Brown —beware. (*He steals towards the door on the* L.—*opens it, and exit cautiously into the room. As he does so,* TOM *turns the other way.*)

TOM (*closing the book*). It's very pretty Greek, I think. What a time they are!

MR. STARGAZER *and* MOONEY *enter from room.*

MOONEY. Tell the noble gentleman of his irrevocable destiny.

MR. STARGAZER (*with emotion*). No—no, prepare him first.

TOM (*aside*). Prepare him! "prepared by Mr. Mooney."—This is a case of kidnapping and slaughter. (*To them.*) Let him attempt to prepare me at his peril!

MR. STARGAZER. Mr. Grig, why this demonstration?

TOM. Oh, don't talk to me of demonstrations; you ain't going to demonstrate me, and so I tell you.

MR. STARGAZER. Alas! (*Crossing to him.*) The truth we have to communicate requires but little demonstration from our feeble lips. We have calculated upon your nativity.

MOONEY. Yes, we have, we have.

MR. STARGAZER. Tender-hearted man! (MOONEY *weeps.*) See there, Mr. Grig, isn't that affecting?

TOM. What is he piping his boiled gooseberry eye for, sir? How should I know whether it's affecting or not?

MR. STARGAZER. For you, for you. We find that you will expire to-morrow two months, at thirty minutes—wasn't it thirty minutes, my friend?

MOONEY. Thirty-five minutes, twenty-seven seconds, and five-sixths of a second. Oh! (*Groans.*)

MR. STARGAZER. Thirty-five minutes, twenty-seven seconds, and five-sixths of a second past nine o'clock.

MOONEY. A.M. (*They both wipe their eyes.*)

TOM (*alarmed*). Don't tell me, you've made a mistake somewhere—I won't believe it.

MOONEY. No, it is all correct, we worked it all in the most satisfactory manner.—Oh! (*Groans again.*)

TOM. Satisfactory, sir! Your notions of the satisfactory are of an extraordinary nature.

MR. STARGAZER (*producing a pamphlet*). It is confirmed by the prophetic almanack. Here is the prediction for to-morrow two months: "The decease of a great person may be looked for about this time."

TOM (*dropping into his chair*). That's me! It's all up! inter me decently, my friends.

MR. STARGAZER (*shaking his hand*). Your wishes shall be attended to. We must have the marriage with my niece at once. in order that your distinguished race may be transmitted to posterity. Condole with him, my Mooney, while I compose my feelings, and settle the preliminaries of the marriage in solitude.

(*Takes up lamp and exit into room* R. MOONEY *draws up a chair in a line with* TOM, *a long way off. They both sigh heavily.* GALILEO *opens the lumber-room door. As he does so the room door opens and* BETSY *steals softly in, beckoning to* EMMA *and* FANNY, *who follow. He retires again abruptly.*)

BETSY (*aside*). Now, young ladies, if you take heart only for one minute, you may frighten Mr. Mooney out of being married at once.

EMMA. But if he has serious thoughts.

BETSY. Nonsense, Miss, he hasn't any thoughts. Your papa says to him, "Will you marry my daughter?" and he says, "Yes, I will"; and he would and will if you ain't bold, but bless you, he never turned it over in his mind for a minute. If you, Miss (*to* EMMA), pretend to

hate him and love a rival, and you, Miss (*to* FANNY), to love him to distraction, you'll frighten him so betwixt you that he'll declare off directly, I warrant. The love will frighten him quite as much as the hate. He never saw a woman in a passion, and as to one in love, I don't believe that anybody but his mother ever kissed that grumpy old face of his in all his born days. Now, do try him, ladies. Come, we're losing time.

(*She conceals herself behind the skeleton case.* EMMA *rushes up to* TOM GRIG *and embraces him, while* FANNY *clasps* MOONEY *round the neck.* GALILEO *appears at his door in an attitude of amazement, and* MR. STARGAZER *at his, after running in again with the lamp, which before he sees what is going forward he had in his hand.* TOM *and* MOONEY *in great astonishment.*)

FANNY (*to* MOONEY). }
EMMA (*to* GRIG). } Hush! Hush!

(TOM GRIG *and* MOONEY *get their heads sufficiently out of the embrace to exchange a look of wonder.*)

EMMA. Dear Mr. Grig, I know you must consider this strange, extraordinary, unaccountable conduct.

TOM. Why, ma'am, without explanation, it does appear singular.

EMMA. Yes, yes, I know it does, I know it will, but the urgency of the case must plead my excuse. Too fascinating Mr. Grig, I have seen you once and only once, but the impression of that maddening interview can never be effaced. I love you to distraction. (*Falls upon his shoulder.*)

TOM. You're extremely obliging, ma'am, it's a flattering sort of thing—or it would be (*aside*) if I was going to live a little longer—but you're not the one, ma'am; it's the other lady that the stars have——

FANNY (*to* MOONEY). Nay, wonderful being, hear me—this is not a time for false conventional delicacy. Wrapt in your sublime visions, you have not [perceived] * the

* The word in brackets is wanting in the manuscript, and is here supplied conjecturally to complete the sense. It appears, however, to be authorized by Dickens's use of it in his story, "The Lamplighter," based on this play.—ED.

silent tokens of a woman's first and all-absorbing attachment, which have been, I fear, but too perceptible in the eyes of others; but now I must speak out. I hate this odious man. You are my first and only love. Oh! speak to me.

MOONEY. I haven't anything appropriate to say, young woman. I think I had better go. (*Attempting to get away.*)

FANNY. Oh! no, no, no (*detaining him*). Give me some encouragement. Not one kind word? not one look of love?

MOONEY. I don't know how to look a look of love—I'm, I'm frightened.

TOM. So am I! I don't understand this. I tell you, Miss, that the other lady is my destined wife. Upon my word you mustn't hug me, you'll make her jealous.

FANNY. Jealous! of you! Hear me (*to* MOONEY). I renounce all claim or title to the hand of that or any other man and vow to be eternally and wholly yours.

MOONEY. No, don't, you can't be mine—nobody can be mine.—I don't want anybody—I—I——

EMMA. If you will not hear her—hear *me*, detested monster.—Hear me declare that sooner than be your bride, with this deep passion for another rooted in my heart —I——

MOONEY. You need not make any declaration on the subject, young woman.

MR. STARGAZER (*coming forward*). She shan't—she shan't. That's right, don't hear her. She shall marry you whether she likes it or not—she shall marry you to-morrow morning—and you, Miss (*to* FANNY), shall marry Mr. Grig if I trundle you to church in a wheelbarrow.

GALILEO (*coming forward*). So she shall! so she may! Let her! let her! I give her leave.

MR. STARGAZER. You give her leave, you young dog! Who the devil cares whether *you* give her leave or not? and what are you spinning about in that way for?

GALILEO. I'm fierce, I'm furious—don't talk to me—I shall do somebody a mischief; I'll never marry anybody after this, never, never, it isn't safe. I'll live and die a bachelor!—there—a bachelor! a bachelor! (*He goes up and encounters* BETSY. *She talks to him apart, and his wrath seems gradually to subside.*)

MOONEY. The little boy, albeit of tender years, has spoken wisdom. I have been led to the contemplation of womankind. I find their love is too violent for my staid habits. I would rather not venture upon the troubled waters of matrimony.

MR. STARGAZER. You don't mean to marry my daughter? Not if I say she *shall* have you? (MOONEY *shakes his head solemnly.*) Mr. Grig, you have not changed your mind because of a little girlish folly?

TOM. To-morrow two months! I may as well get through as much gold as I can in the meantime. Why, sir, if the pot nearly boils (*pointing to the crucible*)—if you're pretty near the philosopher's stone——

MR. STARGAZER. Pretty near! We're sure of it—certain; it's as good as money in the Bank. (GALILEO *and* BETSY, *who have been listening attentively, bustle about, fanning the fire, and throwing in sundry powders from the bottles on the table, then cautiously retire to a distance.*)

TOM. If that's the case, sir, I am ready to keep faith with the planets. I'll take her, sir, I'll take her.

MR. STARGAZER. Then here's her hand, Mr. Grig—no resistance, Miss (*drawing* FANNY *forward*). It's of no use, so you may as well do it with a good grace. Take her hand, Mr. Grig. (*The crucible blows up with a loud crash; they all start.*)

MR. STARGAZER. What!—the labour of fifteen years destroyed in an instant!

MOONEY (*stooping over the fragments*). That's the only disappointment I have experienced in this process since I was first engaged in it when I was a boy. It always blows up when it's on the point of succeeding.

TOM. Is the philosopher's stone gone?

MOONEY. No.

TOM. Not gone, sir?

MOONEY. No—it never came!

MR. STARGAZER. But we'll get it, Mr. Grig. Don't be cast down, we shall discover it in less than fifteen years this time, I dare say.

TOM (*relinquishing* FANNY'S *hand*). Ah! Were the stars very positive about this union?

MR. STARGAZER. They had not a doubt about it. They said it *was* to be, and it must be. They were peremptory.

TOM. I am sorry for that, because they have been very civil to me in the way of showing a light now and then, and I really regret disappointing 'em. But under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it can't be.

MR. STARGAZER. Can't be, Mr. Grig! What can't be?

TOM. The marriage, sir. I forbid the banns. (*Retires and sits down.*)

MR. STARGAZER. Impossible! such a prediction unfulfilled! Why, the consequences would be as fatal as those of a concussion between the comet and this globe. Can't be! it must be, shall be.

BETSY (*coming forward, followed by* GALILEO). If you please, sir, may I say a word?

MR. STARGAZER. What have you got to say?—speak, woman!

BETSY. Why, sir, I don't think Mr. Grig is the right man.

MR. STARGAZER. What!

BETSY. Don't you recollect, sir, that just as the house-clock struck the first stroke of five, you gave Mr. Galileo a thump on the head with the butt end of your telescope, and told him to get out of the way?

MR. STARGAZER. Well, if I did, what of that?

BETSY. Why, then, sir, I say, and I would say it if I was to be killed for it, that he's the young gentleman that ought to marry Miss Fanny, and that the stars never meant anything else.

MR. STARGAZER. He! Why, he's a little boy.

GALILEO. I ain't. I'm one-and-twenty next Lady-day.

MR. STARGAZER. Eh! Eighteen hundred and—why, so he is, I declare. He's quite a stranger to me, certainly. I never thought about his age since he was fourteen, and I remember that birthday, because he'd a new suit of clothes then. But the noble family——

BETSY. Lor', sir! ain't it being of a noble family to be the son of such a clever man as you?

MR. STARGAZER. That's true. And my mother's father would have been Lord Mayor, only he died of turtle the year before.

BETSY. Oh, it's quite clear.

MR. STARGAZER. The only question is about the time, because the church struck afterwards. But I should think the stars, taking so much interest in my house, would most likely go by the house-clock—eh! Mooney?

MOONEY. Decidedly—yes.

MR. STARGAZER. Then you may have her, my son. Her father was a great astronomer; so I hope that, though you *are* a blockhead, your children may be scientific. There! (*Joins their hands.*)

EMMA. Am I free to marry who I like, papa?

MR. STARGAZER. Won't you, Mooney? Won't you?

MOONEY. If anybody asks me to again I'll run away, and never come back any more.

MR. STARGAZER. Then we must drop the subject. Yes, your choice is now unfettered.

EMMA. Thank you, dear papa. Then I'll look about for somebody who will suit me without the delay of an instant longer than is absolutely necessary.

MR. STARGAZER. How very dutiful!

FANNY. And, as my being here just now with Emma was a little trick of Betsy's, I hope you'll forgive her, uncle.

EMMA. }
GALILEO. } Oh, yes, do.

FANNY. And even reward her, uncle, for being instrumental in fulfilling the prediction.

EMMA. }
GALILEO. } Oh, yes, do reward her—do.

FANNY. Perhaps you could find a husband for her, uncle, you know. Don't you understand?

BETSY. Pray don't mention it, Miss. I told you at first, Miss, that I had not the least wish or inclination to have Mr. Grig to myself. I couldn't abear that Mr. Grig should think I wanted him to marry me; oh no, Miss, not on any account.

MR. STARGAZER. Oh, that's pretty intelligible. Here, Mr. Grig. (*They fall back from his chair.*) Have you any objection to take this young woman for better, for worse?

BETSY. Lor', sir! how ondelicate!

MR. STARGAZER. I'll add a portion of ten pounds for your loss of time here to night. What do you say, Mr. Grig?

TOM. It don't much matter. I ain't long for this world. Eight weeks of marriage might reconcile me to my fate. I should go off, I think, more resigned and peaceful. Yes, I'll take her, as a reparation. Come to my arms! (*He embraces her with a dismal face.*)

MR. STARGAZER (*taking a paper from his pocket*). Egad!

that reminds me of what I came back to say, which all this bustle drove out of my head. There's a figure wrong in the nativity (*handing the paper to* MOONEY). He'll live to a green old age.

TOM (*looking up*). Eh! What?

MOONEY. So he will. Eighty-two years and twelve days will be the lowest.

TOM (*disengaging himself*). Eh! here! (*calling off*). Hallo you, sir! bring in that ladder and lantern.

A Servant enters in great haste, and hands them to TOM.

SERVANT. There's such a row in the street—none of the gas-lamps lit, and all the people calling for the lamplighter. *Such* a row! (*Rubbing his hands with great glee.*)

TOM. Is there, my fine fellow? Then I'll go and light 'em. And as, under existing circumstances, and with the prospect of a green old age before me, I'd rather *not* be married, Miss Martin, I beg to assure the ratepayers present that in the future I shall pay the strictest attention to my professional duties, and do my best for the contractor; and that I shall be found upon my beat as long as they condescend to patronise the Lamplighter. (*Runs off.* MISS MARTIN *faints in the arms of* MOONEY.)

CURTAIN.

IS SHE HIS WIFE?
OR, SOMETHING SINGULAR!

A COMIC BURLETTA

IN ONE ACT

[1837]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

At St. James's Theatre, March 6, 1837.

Alfred Lovetown, Esq.	Mr. Forester.
Mr. Peter Limbury	Mr. Gardner.
Felix Tapkins, Esq. (*formerly of the India House, Leadenhall Street, and Prospect Place, Poplar ; but now of the Rustic Lodge, near Reading*) . .	Mr. Harley.
John (*servant to Lovetown*)	
Mrs. Lovetown	Miss Allison.
Mrs. Peter Limbury	Madame Sala.

IS SHE HIS WIFE?
OR, SOMETHING SINGULAR!

SCENE I.— *A Room opening into a Garden. A table laid for breakfast; Chairs, etc.* MR. *and* MRS. LOVETOWN, C., *discovered at Breakfast,* R. H. *The former in a dressing-gown and slippers, reading a newspaper. A Screen on one side.*

LOVETOWN (L. H. *of table, yawning*). Another cup of tea, my dear—O Lord!

MRS. LOVETOWN (R. H. *of table*). I wish, Alfred, you would endeavour to assume a more cheerful appearance in your wife's society. If you are perpetually yawning and complaining of *ennui* a few months after marriage, what am I to suppose you'll become in a few years? It really is very odd of you.

LOVETOWN. Not at all odd, my dear, not the least in the world; it would be a great deal more odd if I were not. The fact is, my love, I'm tired of the country; green fields, and blooming hedges, and feathered songsters, are fine things to talk about and read about and write about; but I candidly confess that I prefer paved streets, area railings and dustman's bells, after all.

MRS. LOVETOWN. How often have you told me that, blessed with my love, you could live contented and happy in a desert?

LOVETOWN (*reading*). "Artful impostor!"

MRS. LOVETOWN. Have you not over and over again said that fortune and personal attractions were secondary considerations with you? That you loved me for those virtues which, while they gave additional lustre to public life, would adorn and sweeten retirement?

LOVETOWN (*reading*). "Soothing syrup!"

MRS. LOVETOWN. You complain of the tedious sameness of a country life. Was it not you yourself who first proposed our residing permanently in the country? Did you not say that I should then have an ample sphere to exercise those charitable feelings which I have so often evinced, by selling at those benevolent fancy fairs?

LOVETOWN (*reading*). "Humane man-traps!"

MRS. LOVETOWN. He pays no attention to me—Alfred dear——

LOVETOWN (*stamping his foot*). Yes, my life.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Have you heard what I have just been saying, dear?

LOVETOWN. Yes, love.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And what can you say in reply?

LOVETOWN. Why, really, my dear, you've said it so often before in the course of the last six weeks, that I think it quite unnecessary to say anything more about it. (*Reads.*) "The learned judge delivered a brief but impressive summary of the unhappy man's trial."

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside*). I could bear anything but this neglect. He evidently does not care for me.

LOVETOWN (*aside*). I could put up with anything rather than these constant altercations and little petty quarrels. I repeat, my dear, that I am very dull in this out-of-the-way villa—confoundedly dull, horridly dull.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And *I* repeat that if you took any pleasure in your wife's society, or felt for her as you once professed to feel, you would have no cause to make such a complaint.

LOVETOWN. If I did not know you to be one of the sweetest creatures in existence, my dear, I should be strongly disposed to say that you were a very close imitation of an aggravating female.

MRS. LOVETOWN. That's very curious, my dear, for I declare that if I hadn't known *you* to be such an exquisite, good-tempered, attentive husband, I should have mistaken you for a very great brute.

LOVETOWN. My dear, you're offensive.

MRS. LOVETOWN. My love, you're intolerable. (*They turn their chairs back to back.*)

MR. FELIX TAPKINS *sings without.*

"The wife around her husband throws
Her arms to make him stay;
'My dear, it rains, it hails, it blows,
And you cannot hunt to-day.'
But a hunting we will go,
And a hunting we will go—wo—wo—wo!
And a hunting we will go."

MRS. LOVETOWN. There's that dear, good-natured creature, Mr. Tapkins—do you ever hear *him* complain of the tediousness of a country life? Light-hearted creature—his lively disposition and rich flow of spirits are wonderful, even to me. (*Rising.*)

LOVETOWN. They need not be a matter of astonishment to anybody, my dear—he's a bachelor.

MR. FELIX TAPKINS *appears at window,* L. H.

TAPKINS. Ha, ha! How are you both?—Here's a morning! Bless my heart alive, *what* a morning! I've been gardening ever since five o'clock, and the flowers have been actually growing before my very eyes. The London Pride is sweeping everything before it, and the stalks are half as high again as they were yesterday. They're all run up like so many tailor's bills, after that heavy dew of last night broke down half my rosebuds with the weight of its own moisture—something like a dew that!—reg'lar *doo,* eh?—come, that's not so bad for a before-dinner one.

LOVETOWN. Ah, you happy dog, Felix!

TAPKINS. Happy! of course I am—Felix by name, Felix by nature—what the deuce should I be unhappy for, or anybody be unhappy for? What's the use of it, that's the point?

MRS. LOVETOWN. Have you finished your improvements yet, Mr. Tapkins?

TAPKINS. At Rustic Lodge? (*She nods assent.*) Bless your heart and soul! you never saw such a place—cardboard chimneys, Grecian balconies—Gothic parapets, thatched roof.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Indeed.

TAPKINS. Lord bless you, yes—green verandah, with ivy twining round the pillars.

MRS. LOVETOWN. How very rural!

TAPKINS. Rural, my dear Mrs. Lovetown! delightful! The French windows, too! Such an improvement!

MRS. LOVETOWN. I should think they were!

TAPKINS. Yes, *I* should think they were. Why, on a fine summer's evening the frogs hop off the grass-plot into the very sitting-room.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Dear me!

TAPKINS. Bless you, yes! Something like the country—quite a little Eden. Why, when I'm smoking under the verandah, after a shower of rain, the black beetles fall into my brandy-and-water.

MR. *and* MRS. LOVETOWN. No!—Ha! ha! ha!

TAPKINS. Yes. And I take 'em out again with the tea-spoon, and lay bets with myself which of them will run away the quickest. Ha! ha! ha! (*They all laugh.*) Then the stable, too. Why, in Rustic Lodge the stables are close to the dining-room window.

LOVETOWN. No!

TAPKINS. Yes. The horse can't cough but I hear him. There's compactness. Nothing like the cottage style of architecture for comfort, my boy. By the by, I have left the new horse at your garden-gate, this moment.

MRS. LOVETOWN. The new horse!

TAPKINS. The new horse! Splendid fellow—such action! Puts out his feet like a rocking-horse, and carries his tail like a hat-peg. Come and see him.

LOVETOWN (*laughing*). I can't deny you anything.

TAPKINS. No, that's what they all say, especially the—eh! (*Nodding and winking.*)

LOVETOWN. Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. LOVETOWN. Ha! ha! ha! I'm afraid you're a very bad man, Mr. Tapkins; I'm afraid you're a shocking man, Mr. Tapkins.

TAPKINS. Think so? No, I don't know—not worse than other people similarly situated. Bachelors, my dear Mrs. Lovetown, bachelors—eh! old fellow? (*Winking to* LOVETOWN.)

LOVETOWN. Certainly, certainly.

TAPKINS. *We* know—eh? (*They all laugh.*) By the by, talking of bachelors puts me in mind of Rustic Lodge, and talking of Rustic Lodge puts me in mind of what

I came here for. You must come and see me this afternoon. Little Peter Limbury and his wife are coming.

MRS. LOVETOWN. I detest that man.

LOVETOWN. The wife is supportable, my dear.

TAPKINS. To be sure, so she is. You'll come, and that's enough. Now come and see the horse.

LOVETOWN. Give me three minutes to put on my coat and boots, and I'll join you. I won't be three minutes.

[*Exit* LOVETOWN, R. H.

TAPKINS. Look sharp, look sharp!—Mrs. Lovetown, will you excuse me one moment? (*Crosses to* L.; *calling off.*) Jim—these fellows never know how to manage horses—walk him gently up and down—throw the stirrups over the saddle to show the people that his master's coming, and if anybody asks what that fine animal's pedigree is, and who he belongs to, say he's the property of Mr. Felix Tapkins of Rustic Lodge, near Reading, and that he's the celebrated horse who ought to have won the Newmarket Cup last year, only he didn't.

[*Exit* TAPKINS.

MRS. LOVETOWN. My mind is made up—I can bear Alfred's coldness and insensibility no longer, and come what may I will endeavour to remove it. From the knowledge I have of his disposition I am convinced that the only mode of doing so will be by rousing his jealousy and wounding his vanity. This thoughtless creature will be a very good instrument for my scheme. He plumes himself on his gallantry, has no very small share of vanity, and is easily led. I see him crossing the garden. (*She brings a chair hastily forward and sits* R. H.)

Enter FELIX TAPKINS, L. H. *window.*

TAPKINS (*singing*). "My dear, it rains it hails, it blows"——

MRS. LOVETOWN (*tragically*). Would that I had never beheld him!

TAPKINS (*aside*). Hallo! She's talking about her husband. I knew by their manner there had been a quarrel, when I came in this morning.

MRS. LOVETOWN. So fascinating, and yet so insensible to the tenderest of passions as not to see how devotedly I love him.

TAPKINS (*aside*). I thought so.

MRS. LOVETOWN. That he should still remain unmarried is to me extraordinary.

TAPKINS. Um!

MRS. LOVETOWN. He ought to have married long since.

TAPKINS (*aside*). Eh! Why, they aren't married!—"ought to have married long since"—I rather think he ought.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And, though I am the wife of another——

TAPKINS (*aside.*) Wife of another!

MRS. LOVETOWN. Still, I grieve to say that I cannot be blind to his extraordinary merits.

TAPKINS. Why, he's run away with somebody else's wife! The villain!—I must let her know I'm in the room, or there's no telling what I may hear next. (*Coughs.*)

MRS. LOVETOWN (*starting up in affected confusion*). Mr. Tapkins! (*They sit.*) Bring your chair nearer. I fear, Mr. Tapkins, that I have been unconsciously giving utterance to what was passing in my mind. I trust you have not overheard my confession of the weakness of my heart.

TAPKINS. No—no—not more than a word or two.

MRS. LOVETOWN. That agitated manner convinces me that you have heard more than you are willing to confess. Then why—why should I seek to conceal from you—that though I esteem my husband, I—I—love—another?

TAPKINS. I heard you mention that little circumstance.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Oh! (*Sighs.*)

TAPKINS (*aside*). What the deuce is she Oh-ing at? She looks at me as if I were Lovetown himself.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*putting her hand on his shoulder with a languishing air*). Does my selection meet with your approbation?

TAPKINS (*slowly*). It doesn't.

MRS. LOVETOWN. No!

TAPKINS. Decidedly not. (*Aside.*) I'll cut that Lovetown out, and offer myself. Hem! Mrs. Lovetown.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Yes, Mr. Tapkins.

TAPKINS. I know an individual——

MRS. LOVETOWN. Ah! an individual!

TAPKINS. An individual—I may, perhaps, venture to say an estimable individual—who for the last three months

has been constantly in your society, who never yet had courage to disclose his passion, but who burns to throw himself at your feet. Oh! (*Aside.*) I'll try an Oh or two now—Oh! (*Sighs.*) That's a capital Oh!

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside.*) He must have misunderstood me before, for he is evidently speaking of himself. Is the gentleman you speak of handsome, Mr. Tapkins?

TAPKINS. He is generally considered remarkably so.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Is he tall?

TAPKINS. About the height of the Apollo Belvidere.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Is he stout?

TAPKINS. Of nearly the same dimensions as the gentleman I have just named.

MRS. LOVETOWN. His figure is——

TAPKINS. Quite a model.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And he is——

TAPKINS. Myself. (*Throws himself on his knees and seizes her hand.*)

Enter LOVETOWN, R. H.

TAPKINS *immediately pretends to be diligently looking for something on the floor.*

MRS. LOVETOWN. Pray don't trouble yourself. I'll find it. Dear me! how could I lose it?

LOVETOWN. What have you lost, love? I should almost imagine that you had lost yourself, and that our friend Mr. Tapkins here had just found you.

TAPKINS (*aside*). Ah! you always will have your joke —funny dog! funny dog! Bless my heart and soul, there's that immortal horse standing outside all this time. He'll catch his death of cold! Come and see him at once—come—come.

LOVETOWN. No. I can't see him to-day. I had forgotten. I've letters to write—business to transact—I'm engaged.

TAPKINS (*to* MRS. LOVETOWN). Oh, if he's engaged, you know, we'd better not interrupt him.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Oh! certainly! Not by any means.

TAPKINS (*taking her arm*). Good-by, old fellow.

LOVETOWN (*seating himself at table*). Oh!—good-by.

TAPKINS (*going*). Take care of yourself. I'll take care of Mrs. L. [*Exeunt* TAPKINS *and* MRS. LOVETOWN, C.

LOVETOWN. What the deuce does that fellow mean by

laying such emphasis on Mrs. L.? What's my wife to him, or he to my wife? Very extraordinary! I can hardly believe that even if he had the treachery to make any advances, she would encourage such a preposterous intrigue. (*Walks to and fro.*) She spoke in his praise at breakfast-time, though—and they have gone away together to see that confounded horse. But stop, I must keep a sharp eye upon them this afternoon, without appearing to do so. I would not appear unnecessarily suspicious for the world. Dissembling in such a case, though, is difficult—very difficult.

Enter a Servant, L. H.

SERVANT. Mr. and Mrs. Peter Limbury.

LOVETOWN. Desire them to walk in. [*Exit Servant,* L. H. A lucky visit! it furnishes me with a hint. This Mrs. Limbury is a vain, conceited woman, ready to receive the attentions of anybody who feigns admiration for her, partly to gratify herself, and partly to annoy the jealous little husband whom she keeps under such strict control. If I pay particular attention to *her*, I shall lull my wife and that scoundrel Tapkins into a false security, and have better opportunities of observation. They are here.

Enter MR. *and* MRS. LIMBURY, L. H.

LOVETOWN. My dear Mrs. Limbury. (*Crosses to* C.)

LIMBURY. Eh?

LOVETOWN (*not regarding him*). How charming—how delightful—how divine you look to-day.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Dear Mrs. Limbury—charming—divine and beautiful look to-day! They are smiling at each other—he squeezes her hand. I see how it is. I always thought he paid her too much attention.

LOVETOWN. Sit down—sit down.

(LOVETOWN *places the chairs so as to sit between them, which* LIMBURY *in vain endeavours to prevent.*)

MRS. LIMBURY. Peter and I called as we passed in our little pony-chaise, to inquire whether we should have the pleasure of seeing you at Tapkins's this afternoon.

LOVETOWN. Is it possible you can ask such a question? Do you think I could stay away?

MRS. LIMBURY. Dear Mr. Lovetown! (*Aside.*) How polite—he's quite struck with me.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Wretched miscreant! a regular assignation before my very face.

LOVETOWN (*to* MRS. LIMBURY). Do you know I entertained some apprehensions—some dreadful fears—that you might not be there.

LIMBURY. Fears that we mightn't be there? Of course we shall be there.

MRS. LIMBURY. Now, don't talk, Peter.

LOVETOWN. I thought it just possible, you know, that you might not be agreeable——

MRS. LIMBURY. O, Peter is always agreeable to anything that is agreeable to me. Aren't you, Peter?

LIMBURY. Yes, dearest. (*Aside.*) Agreeable to anything that's agreeable to her! O Lor'!

MRS. LIMBURY. By the by, Mr. Lovetown, how do you like this bonnet?

LOVETOWN. O, beautiful!

LIMBURY (*aside*). I must change the subject. Do you know, Mr. Lovetown, I have often thought, and it has frequently occurred to me—when——

MRS. LIMBURY. Now don't talk, Peter. (*To* LOVETOWN.) The colour is so bright, is it not?

LOVETOWN. It might appear so elsewhere, but the brightness of those eyes casts it quite into shade.

MRS. LIMBURY. I know you are a connoisseur in ladies' dresses; how do you like those shoes?

LIMBURY (*aside*). Her shoes! What will she ask his opinion of next?

LOVETOWN. O, like the bonnet, you deprive them of their fair chance of admiration. That small and elegant foot engrosses all the attention which the shoes might otherwise attract. That taper ankle, too——

LIMBURY (*aside*). Her taper ankle! My bosom swells with the rage of an ogre. Mr. Lovetown—I——

MRS. LIMBURY. Now, pray do not talk so, Limbury. You've put Mr. Lovetown out as it is.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Put him out! I wish I could put him out, Mrs. Limbury. I must.

Enter Servant, hastily.

SERVANT. I beg your pardon, sir, but the bay pony has got his hind leg over the traces, and he's kicking the chaise to pieces!

LIMBURY. Kicking the *new* chaise to pieces!

LOVETOWN. Kicking the new chaise to pieces! The bay pony! Limbury, my dear fellow, fly to the spot! (*Pushing him out.*)

LIMBURY. But, Mr. Lovetown, I——

MRS. LIMBURY. Oh! he'll kick somebody's brains out, if Peter don't go to him.

LIMBURY. But perhaps he'll kick my brains out if I do go to him.

LOVETOWN. Never mind, don't lose an instant—not a moment. (*Pushes him out, both talking together.*)

[*Exit* LIMBURY.

(*Aside.*) Now for it—here's my wife. Dearest Mrs. Limbury—(*Kneels by her chair and seizes her hand.*)

Enter MRS. LOVETOWN, C.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside*). Can I believe my eyes? (*Retires behind the screen.*)

MRS. LIMBURY. Mr. Lovetown!

LOVETOWN. Nay. Allow me in one hurried interview, which I have sought for in vain for weeks—for months—to say how devotedly, how ardently I love you. Suffer me to retain this hand in mine. Give me one ray of hope.

MRS. LIMBURY. Rise, I entreat you—we shall be discovered.

LOVETOWN. Nay, I will not rise till you promise me that you will take an opportunity of detaching yourself from the rest of the company and meeting me alone in Tapkins's grounds this evening. I shall have no eyes, no ears for any one but yourself.

MRS. LIMBURY. Well—well—I will—I do——

LOVETOWN. Then I am blest indeed!

MRS. LIMBURY. I am so agitated. If Peter or Mrs. Lovetown—were to find me thus—I should betray all. I'll teach my husband to be jealous! (*Crosses to* L. H.) Let us walk round the garden.

LOVETOWN. With pleasure—take my arm. Divine creature! (*Aside.*) I'm sure she is behind the screen. I saw her peeping. Come.

[*Exit* LOVETOWN *and* MRS. LIMBURY, L. H.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*coming forward*). Faithless man! His coldness and neglect are now too well explained. O

Alfred! Alfred! how little did I think when I married you, six short months since, that I should be exposed to so much wretchedness! I begin to tremble at my own imprudence, and the situation in which it may place me; but it is now too late to recede. I must be firm. This day will either bring my project to the explanation I so much desire, or convince me of what I too much fear—my husband's aversion. Can this woman's husband suspect their intimacy? If so, he may be able to prevent this assignation taking place. I will seek him instantly. If I can but meet him at once, he may prevent her going at all.

[*Exit* MRS. LOVETOWN, R. H.

Enter TAPKINS, L. H. *window.*

TAPKINS. This, certainly, is a most extraordinary affair. Not her partiality for me—that's natural enough—but the confession I overheard about her marriage to another. I have been thinking that, after such a discovery, it would be highly improper to allow Limbury and his wife to meet her without warning him of the fact. The best way will be to make him acquainted with the real state of the case. Then he must see the propriety of not bringing his wife to my house to-night. Ah! here he is. I'll make the awful disclosure at once, and petrify him.

Enter LIMBURY, L. H. *window.*

LIMBURY. That damned little bay pony is as bad as my wife. There's no curbing either of them; and as soon as I have got the traces of the one all right, I lose all traces of the other.

TAPKINS (R.). Peter!

LIMBURY (L.). Ah! Tapkins!

TAPKINS. Hush! Hush! (*Looking cautiously round.*) If you have a moment to spare, I've got something of great importance to communicate.

LIMBURY. Something of great importance, Mr. Tapkins! (*Aside.*) What can he mean? Can it relate to Mrs. Limbury? The thought is dreadful. You horrify me!

TAPKINS. You'll be more horrified presently. What I am about to tell you concerns yourself and your honour very materially; and I beg you to understand that I communicate it—in the strictest confidence.

LIMBURY. Myself and my honour! I shall dissolve into nothing with horrible anticipations!

TAPKINS (*in a low tone*). Have you ever observed anything remarkable about Lovetown's manner?

LIMBURY. Anything remarkable?

TAPKINS. Ay—anything very odd, and rather unpleasant?

LIMBURY. Decidedly! No longer than half an hour ago —in this very room, I observed something in his manner particularly odd and exceedingly unpleasant.

TAPKINS. To your feelings as a husband?

LIMBURY. Yes, my friend, yes, yes; you know it all I see!

TAPKINS. What! Do *you* know it?

LIMBURY. I'm afraid I do; but go on—go on.

TAPKINS (*aside*). How the deuce can he know anything about it? Well, this oddness arises from the peculiar nature of his connection with—— You look very pale.

LIMBURY. No, no—go on—"connection with——"

TAPKINS. A certain lady—you know whom I mean.

LIMBURY. I do, I do! (*Aside.*) Disgrace and confusion! I'll kill her with a look! I'll wither her with scornful indignation! Mrs. Limbury!—viper!

TAPKINS (*whispering with caution*). They—aren't—married.

LIMBURY. *They* aren't married! *Who* aren't?

TAPKINS. Those two, to be sure!

LIMBURY. *Those* two! *What* two?

TAPKINS. Why, them. And the worst of it is she's—she's married to somebody else.

LIMBURY. Well, of course, I know that.

TAPKINS. You know it?

LIMBURY. Of course I do. Why, how you talk! Isn't she my wife?

TAPKINS. *Your* wife! Wretched bigamist! Mrs. Lovetown your wife?

LIMBURY. Mrs. Lovetown! What! Have you been talking of Mrs. Lovetown all this time? My dear friend! (*Embraces him.*) The revulsion of feeling is almost insupportable. I thought you were talking about Mrs. Limbury.

TAPKINS. No!

LIMBURY. Yes. Ha! ha! But I say, what a dreadful fellow this is—another man's wife! Gad, I think he wants to run away with every man's wife he sees. And Mrs. Lovetown, too—horrid!

TAPKINS. Shocking!

LIMBURY. I say, I oughtn't to allow Mrs. Limbury to associate with her, ought I?

TAPKINS. Precisely my idea. You had better induce your wife to stay away from my house to-night.

LIMBURY. I'm afraid I can't do that.

TAPKINS. What, has she any particular objection to staying away?

LIMBURY. She has a very strange inclination to go, and 'tis much the same; however, I'll make the best arrangement I can!

TAPKINS. Well, so be it. Of course I shall see *you?*

LIMBURY. Of course.

TAPKINS. Mind the secret—close—close—you know, as a Cabinet Minister answering a question.

LIMBURY. You may rely upon me.

[*Exit* LIMBURY, L. H., TAPKINS, R. H.

SCENE II.—*A Conservatory on one side. A Summer-house on the other.*

Enter LOVETOWN *at* L. H.

LOVETOWN. So far so good. My wife has not dropped the slightest hint of having overheard the conversation between me and Mrs. Limbury; but she cannot conceal the impression it has made upon her mind, or the jealousy it has evidently excited in her breast. This is just as I wished. I made Mr. Peter Limbury's amiable helpmeet promise to meet me here. I know that refuge for destitute reptiles (*pointing to summer-house*) is Tapkins's favourite haunt, and if he has any assignation with my wife, I have no doubt he will lead her to this place. A woman's coming down the walk. Mrs. Limbury, I suppose—no, my wife, by all that's actionable. I must conceal myself here, even at the risk of a shower of black beetles, or a marching regiment of frogs. (*Goes into conservatory,* L. H.)

Enter MRS. LOVETOWN *from top,* L. H.

MRS. LOVETOWN. I cannot have been mistaken. I am certain I saw Alfred here; he must have secreted himself somewhere to avoid me. Can his assignation with

Mrs. Limbury have been discovered? Mr. Limbury's behaviour to me just now was strange in the extreme; and after a variety of incoherent expressions he begged me to meet him here, on a subject, as he said, of great delicacy and importance to myself. Alas! I fear that my husband's neglect and unkindness are but too well known. The injured little man approaches. I summon all my fortitude to bear the disclosure.

Enter MR. LIMBURY *at top*, L. H.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Now as I could not prevail on Mrs. Limbury to stay away, the only distressing alternative I have is to inform Mrs. Lovetown that I know her history, and to put it to her good feeling whether she hadn't better go.

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Limbury! what the deuce can that little wretch want here?

LIMBURY. I took the liberty, Mrs. Lovetown, of begging you to meet me in this retired spot, because the esteem I still entertain for you, and my regard for your feelings, induce me to prefer a private to a public disclosure.

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). "Public disclosure!" what on earth is he talking about? I wish he'd speak a little louder.

MRS. LOVETOWN. I am sensible of your kindness, Mr. LIMBURY, and believe me most grateful for it. I am fully prepared to hear what you have to say.

LIMBURY. It is hardly necessary for me, I presume, to say, Mrs. Lovetown, that I have accidentally discovered the whole secret.

MRS. LOVETOWN. The whole secret, sir?

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Whole secret! What secret?

LIMBURY. The whole secret, ma'am, of this disgraceful—I must call it disgraceful—and most abominable intrigue.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside*). My worst fears are realised—my husband's neglect is occasioned by his love for another.

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Abominable intrigue! My first suspicions are too well founded. He reproaches my wife with her infidelity, and she cannot deny it—that villain Tapkins!

MRS. LOVETOWN (*weeping*). Cruel—cruel—Alfred!

LIMBURY. You may well call him cruel, unfortunate woman. His usage of you is indefensible, unmanly, scandalous.

MRS. LOVETOWN. It is. It is, indeed.

LIMBURY. It's very painful for me to express myself in such plain terms, Mrs. Lovetown; but allow me to say, as delicately as possible, that you should not endeavour to appear in society under such unusual and distressing circumstances.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Not appear in society! Why should I quit it?

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Shameful woman!

LIMBURY. Is it possible you can ask such a question?

MRS. LOVETOWN. What should I do? Where can I go?

LIMBURY. Gain permission to return once again to your husband's roof.

MRS. LOVETOWN. My husband's roof?

LIMBURY. Yes, the roof of your husband, your wretched, unfortunate husband!

MRS. LOVETOWN. Never!

LIMBURY (*aside*). She's thoroughly hardened, steeped in vice beyond redemption. Mrs. Lovetown, as you reject my well-intentioned advice in this extraordinary manner, I am reduced to the painful necessity of expressing my hope that you will—now pray don't think me unkind—that you never attempt to meet Mrs. Limbury more.

MRS. LOVETOWN. What! Can you suppose I am so utterly dead to every sense of feeling and propriety as to meet that person—the destroyer of my peace and happiness—the wretch who has ruined my hopes and blighted my prospects for ever? Ask your own heart, sir—appeal to your own feelings. *You* are naturally indignant at her conduct. *You* would hold no further communication with her. Can you suppose, then, I would deign to do so? The mere supposition is an insult! [*Exit* MRS. LOVETOWN *hastily at top*, L. H.

LIMBURY. What can all this mean? I am lost in a maze of astonishment, petrified at the boldness with which she braves it out. Eh! it's breaking upon me by degrees. I see it. What did she say? "Destroyer of peace and happiness—person—ruined hopes and blighted prospects—*her*." I see it all. That atrocious Lovetown, that Don Juan multiplied by twenty, that unprecedented libertine, has seduced Mrs. Limbury from her allegiance to her lawful lord and master. He first of all runs away with the wife of another man, and

he is no sooner tired of her, than he runs away with another wife of another man. I thirst for his destruction. I——(LOVETOWN *rushes from the conservatory and embraces* LIMBURY, *who disengages himself.*) Murderer of domestic happiness! behold your victim!

LOVETOWN. Alas! you speak but too truly. (*Covering his face with his hands.*) I am the victim.

LIMBURY. I speak but too truly!—He avows his own criminality. I shall throttle him. I know I shall. I feel it.

Enter MRS. LIMBURY, *at back,* L. H.

MRS. LIMBURY (*aside*). My husband here! (*Goes into conservatory.*)

Enter TAPKINS *at back,* L. H.

TAPKINS (*aside*). Not here, and her husband with Limbury. I'll reconnoitre. (*Goes into summer-house,* R. H.)

LIMBURY. Lovetown, have you the boldness to look an honest man in the face?

LOVETOWN. O, spare me! I feel the situation in which I am placed acutely, deeply. Feel for me when I say that from that conservatory I overheard the greater part of what passed between you and Mrs. Lovetown.

LIMBURY. You did?

LOVETOWN. Need I say how highly I approve both of the language you used, and the advice you gave her?

LIMBURY. What! you want to get rid of her, do you?

LOVETOWN. Can you doubt it?

TAPKINS (*peeping*). Hallo! he wants to get rid of her. Queer!

LOVETOWN. Situated as I am, you know, I have no other resource, after what has passed. I must part from her.

MRS. LIMBURY (*peeping*). What can he mean?

LIMBURY (*aside*). I should certainly throttle him, were it not that the coolness with which he refers to the dreadful event paralyses me. Mr. Lovetown, look at me! Sir, consider the feelings of an indignant husband, sir!

LOVETOWN. Oh, I thank you for those words. Those strong expressions prove the unaffected interest you take in the matter.

LIMBURY. Unaffected interest! I shall go raving mad

with passion and fury! Villain! Monster! To embrace the opportunity afforded him of being on a footing of friendship.

LOVETOWN. To take a mean advantage of his being a single man.

LIMBURY. To tamper with the sacred engagements of a married woman.

LOVETOWN. To place a married man in a disgraceful and humiliating situation.

LIMBURY. Scoundrel! Do you mock me to my face?

LOVETOWN. Mock *you!* What d'ye mean? Who the devil are you talking about?

LIMBURY. Talking about—*you!*

LOVETOWN. Me!

LIMBURY. Designing miscreant! Of whom do *you* speak?

LOVETOWN. Of whom should I speak but that scoundrel Tapkins?

TAPKINS (*coming forward,* R.). Me! What the devil do you mean by that?

LOVETOWN. Ha! (*Rushing at him, is held back by* LIMBURY.)

LIMBURY (*to* TAPKINS). Avoid him. Get out of his sight. He's raving mad with conscious villainy.

TAPKINS. What are you all playing at *I spy I* over my two acres of infant hay for?

LOVETOWN (*to* TAPKINS). How dare you tamper with the affections of Mrs. Lovetown?

TAPKINS. O, is that all? Ha! ha! (*Crosses to* C.)

LOVETOWN. All!

TAPKINS. Come, come, none of your nonsense.

LOVETOWN. Nonsense! Designate the best feelings of our nature nonsense!

TAPKINS. Pooh! pooh! Here, I know all about it.

LOVETOWN (*angrily*). And so do I, sir! And so do I.

TAPKINS. Of course you do. And you've managed very well to keep it quiet so long. But you're a deep fellow, by Jove! you're a deep fellow!

LOVETOWN. Now, mind! I restrain myself sufficiently to ask you once again before I knock you down, by what right dare you tamper with the affections of Mrs. Lovetown?

TAPKINS. Right! O, if you come to strict right, you know, nobody has a right but her husband.

LOVETOWN. And who is her husband? Who is her husband?

TAPKINS. Ah! to be sure, that's the question. Nobody that I know. I hope—poor fellow——

LOVETOWN. I'll bear these insults no longer! (*Rushes towards* TAPKINS. LIMBURY *interposes.* LOVETOWN *crosses to* R. H. *A scream is heard from the conservatory —a pause.*)

TAPKINS. Something singular among the plants! (*He goes into the conservatory and returns with* MRS. LIMBURY.) A flower that wouldn't come out of its own accord. I was obliged to force it. Tolerably full blown now, at all events.

LIMBURY. My wife! Traitoress! (*Crosses to* L. H.) Fly from my presence! Quit my sight! Return to the conservatory with that demon in a frock-coat!

Enter MRS. LOVETOWN *at top,* L. H., *and comes down* C.

TAPKINS. Hallo! Somebody else!

LOVETOWN (*aside*). My wife here!

MRS. LOVETOWN (*to* LIMBURY). I owe you some return for the commiseration you expressed just now for my wretched situation. The best, the only one I can make you is, to entreat you to refrain from committing any rash act, however excited you may be, and to control the feelings of an injured husband.

TAPKINS. Injured husband! Decidedly singular!

LOVETOWN. The allusion of that lady I confess my utter inability to understand. Mr. Limbury, to you an explanation is due, and I make it more cheerfully, as my abstaining from doing so might involve the character of your wife. Stung by the attentions which I found Mrs. Lovetown had received from a scoundrel present——

TAPKINS (*aside*). That's me.

LOVETOWN. I—partly to obtain opportunities of watching her closely, under an assumed mask of levity and carelessness, and partly in the hope of awaking once again any dormant feelings of affection that might still slumber in her breast, affected a passion for your wife which I never felt, and to which she never really responded. The second part of my project, I regret to say, has failed. The first has succeeded but too well.

LIMBURY. Can I believe my ears? But how came Mrs. Peter Limbury to receive those attentions?

MRS. LIMBURY. Why, not because I liked them, of course, but to assist Mr. Lovetown in his project, and to teach you the misery of those jealous fears. Come here, you stupid little jealous, insinuating darling. (*They retire up* L. H., *she coaxing him.*)

TAPKINS (*aside*). It strikes me very forcibly that I have made a slight mistake here, which is something particularly singular. (*Turns up* R. H.)

MRS. LOVETOWN. Alfred, hear me! I am as innocent as yourself. Your fancied neglect and coldness hurt my weak vanity, and roused some foolish feelings of angry pride. In a moment of irritation I resorted to some such retaliation as you have yourself described. That I did so from motives as guiltless as your own I call Heaven to witness. That I repent my fault I solemnly assure you.

LOVETOWN. Is this possible?

TAPKINS. Very possible indeed! Believe your wife's assurance and my corroboration. Here, give and take is all fair, you know. Give me your hand and take your wife's. Here, Mr. and Mrs. L. (*To* LIMBURY.) Double L—I call them. (*To* LOVETOWN.) Small italic and Roman capital. (*To* MR. *and* MRS. LIMBURY, *who come forward.*) Here, it's all arranged. The key to the whole matter is, that I've been mistaken, which is something singular. If I have made another mistake in calculating on *your* kind and lenient reception of our last half-hour's misunderstanding (*to the audience*), I shall have done something more singular still. Do you forbid me committing any more mistakes, or may I announce my intention of doing something singular again?

CURTAIN.

POEMS OF CHARLES DICKENS

POEMS OF CHARLES DICKENS

SONGS FROM THE "PICKWICK PAPERS."

[1837.]

I.—THE IVY GREEN.

This famous ballad of three verses, from the sixth chapter of "Pickwick," is perhaps the most acceptable of all Dickens's poetical efforts. It was originally set to music, at Dickens's request, by his brother-in-law, Henry Burnett, a professional vocalist, who, by the way, was the admitted prototype of Nicholas Nickleby. Mr. Burnett sang the ballad scores of times in the presence of literary men and artists, and it proved an especial favourite with Landor. "The Ivy Green" was not written for "Pickwick," Mr. Burnett assured me; but on its being so much admired the author said it should go into a monthly number, and it did. The most popular setting is undoubtedly that of Henry Russell, who has recorded that he received, as his fee, the magnificent sum of ten shillings! The ballad, in this form, went in to many editions, and the sales must have amounted to tens of thousands.—F. G. K.

Oh, a dainty plant is the Ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old!
Of right choice food are his meals, I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed,
To pleasure his dainty whim:
And the mouldering dust that years have made
Is a merry meal for him.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, though he wears no wings,
And a staunch old heart has he.
How closely he twineth, how tight he clings,
To his friend the huge Oak Tree!
And slily he traileth along the ground,

And his leaves he gently waves,
As he joyously hugs and crawleth round
The rich mould of dead men's graves.
Creeping where grim death hath been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Whole ages have fled and their works decayed,
And nations have scattered been;
But the stout old Ivy shall never fade,
From its hale and hearty green.
The brave old plant, in its lonely days,
Shall fatten upon the past:
For the stateliest building man can raise
Is the Ivy's food at last.
Creeping on, where time has been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

II.—A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

The five stanzas bearing the above title will be found in the twenty-eighth chapter of "Pickwick," where they are introduced as the song which that hospitable old soul, Mr. Wardle, sung appropriately, "in a good, round, sturdy voice," before the Pickwickians and others assembled on Christmas Eve at Manor Farm. The "Carol," shortly after its appearance in "Pickwick," was set to music to the air of "Old King Cole," and published in "The Book of British Song" (New Edition), with an illustration drawn by "Alfred Crowquill"—*i.e.*, A. H. Forrester.—F. G. K.

I care not for Spring; on his fickle wing
Let the blossoms and buds be borne:
He woos them amain with his treacherous rain,
And he scatters them ere the morn.
An inconstant elf, he knows not himself
Nor his own changing mind an hour,
He'll smile in your face, and, with wry grimace,
He'll wither your youngest flower.

Let the Summer sun to his bright home run,
He shall never be sought by me;
When he's dimmed by a cloud I can laugh aloud,
And care not how sulky he be!
For his darling child is the madness wild
That sports in fierce fever's train;
And when love is too strong, it don't last long,
As many have found to their pain.

*THE IVY GREEN.

Written by Charles Dickens Esqr.

Composed by

HENRY RUSSELL.

Pr 2/6

Ent. Sta. Hall.

LONDON. D'ALMAINE & Cº SOHO SQUARE.

* The Words of this Song are Published by the express permission of the Author Charles Dickens Esqr.

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Cover design of the song "The Ivy Green," by H. C. Maguire.

A mild harvest night, by the tranquil light
Of the modest and gentle moon,
Has a far sweeter sheen, for me, I ween,
Than the broad and unblushing noon.
But every leaf awakens my grief,
As it lieth beneath the tree;
So let Autumn air be never so fair,
It by no means agrees with me.

But my song I troll out, for CHRISTMAS stout,
The hearty, the true, and the bold;
A bumper I drain, and with might and main
Give three cheers for this Christmas old!
We'll usher him in with a merry din
That shall gladden his joyous heart,
And we'll keep him up, while there's bite or sup,
And in fellowship good, we'll part.

In his fine honest pride, he scorns to hide
One jot of his hard-weather scars;
They're no disgrace, for there's much the same trace
On the cheeks of our bravest tars.
Then again I sing till the roof doth ring,
And it echoes from wall to wall—
To the stout old wight, fair welcome to-night,
As the King of the Seasons all!

III.—GABRIEL GRUB'S SONG.

THE Sexton's melancholy dirge, in the twenty-ninth chapter of "Pickwick," seems a little incongruous in a humorous work. The sentiment, however, thoroughly accords with the philosophic grave-digger's gruesome occupation. "The Story of the Goblins who Stole a Sexton" is one of several short tales (chiefly of a dismal character) introduced into "Pickwick"; they were doubtless written prior to the conception of "Pickwick," each being probably intended for independent publication, and in a manner similar to the "Boz" Sketches. For some reason these stories were not so published, and Dickens evidently saw a favourable opportunity of utilising his unused manuscripts by inserting them in the "Pickwick Papers."—F. G. K.

BRAVE lodgings for one, brave lodgings for one,
A few feet of cold earth, when life is done;
A stone at the head, a stone at the feet,
A rich, juicy meal for the worms to eat;
Rank grass overhead, and damp clay around,
Brave lodgings for one, these, in holy ground!

IV.—ROMANCE.

It will be remembered that while Sam Weller and his coaching-friends refreshed themselves at the little public house opposite the Insolvent Court in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, prior to Sam joining Mr. Pickwick in the Fleet, that faithful body-servant was persuaded to "oblige the company" with a song. "'Raly, gentlemen,' said Sam, 'I'm not wery much in the habit o' singin' vithout the instrument; but anythin' for a quiet life, as the man said ven he took the sitivation at the lighthouse.'

"With this prelude, Mr. Samuel Weller burst at once into the following wild and beautiful legend, which, under the impression that it is not generally known, we take the liberty of quoting. We would beg to call particular attention to the monosyllable at the end of the second and fourth lines, which not only enables the singer to take breath at those points, but greatly assists the metre."—The "Pickwick Papers," chapter xliii.

At the conclusion of the performance the mottled-faced gentleman contended that the song was "personal to the cloth," and demanded the name of the bishop's coachman, whose cowardice he regarded as a reflection upon coachmen in general. Sam replied that his name was not known, as "he hadn't got his card in his pocket"; whereupon the mottled-faced gentleman declared the statement to be untrue, stoutly maintaining that the said coachman did *not* run away, but "died game—game as pheasants," and he would "hear nothin' said to the contrairey."

Even in the vernacular (observes Mr. Percy Fitzgerald), "this master of words [Charles Dickens] could be artistic; and it may fairly be asserted that Mr. Weller's song to the coachmen is superior to anything of the kind that has appeared since." The two stanzas have been set to music, as a humorous part-song, by Sir Frederick Bridge, Mus. Doc., M.V.O., the organist of Westminster Abbey, who informs me that it was written some years since, to celebrate a festive gathering in honour of Dr. Turpin (!), Secretary of the College of Organists. "It has had a very great success, "says Sir Frederick, "and is sung much in the North of England at competitions of choirs. It is for men's voices. The humour of the words never fails to make a great hit, and I hope the music does no harm. 'The Bishop's Coach' is set to a bit of old Plain-Chant, and I introduce a Fugue at the words 'Sure as eggs is eggs.'"—F. G. K.

I.

Bold Turpin vunce, on Hounslow Heath,
His bold mare Bess bestrode—er;
Ven there he see'd the Bishop's coach
A-comin' along the road—er.
So he gallops close to the 'orse's legs,
And he claps his head vithin;
And the Bishop says, "Sure as eggs is eggs,
This here's the bold Turpin!"

Chorus—And the Bishop says, "Sure as eggs is eggs,
This here's the bold Turpin!"

II.

Says Turpin, "You shall eat your words,
With a sarse of leaden bul-let";
So he puts a pistol to his mouth,
And he fires it down his gul-let.
The coachman, he not likin' the job,
Set off at a full gal-lop,
But Dick put a couple of balls in his nob,
And perwailed on him to stop.
Chorus (*sarcastically*)—But Dick put a couple of balls
in his nob,
And perwailed on him to stop.

POLITICAL SQUIBS FROM THE "EXAMINER."

[1841.]

In August, 1841, Dickens contributed anonymously to the "Examiner" (then edited by Forster) three political squibs, which were signed W., and were intended to help the Liberals in fighting their opponents. These squibs were entitled respectively "The Fine Old English Gentleman (to be said or sung at all Conservative Dinners)"; "The Quack Doctor's Proclamation"; and "Subjects for Painters (after Peter Pindar)." Concerning those productions, Forster says: "I doubt if he ever enjoyed anything more than the power of thus taking part occasionally, unknown to outsiders, in the sharp conflict the press was waging at the time." In all probability he contributed other political rhymes to the pages of the "Examiner" as events prompted: if so, they are buried beyond easy reach of identification.

Writing to Forster at this time, Dickens said: "By Jove, how Radical I am getting! I wax stronger and stronger in the true principles every day." . . . He would (observes Forster) sometimes even talk, in moments of sudden indignation at the political outlook, "of carrying off himself and his household gods, like Coriolanus, to a world elsewhere." This was the period of the Tory interregnum, with Sir Robert Peel at the head of affairs.—F. G. K.

I.—THE FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

New Version.

(*To be said or sung at all Conservative Dinners.*)

I'll sing you a new ballad, and I'll warrant it first-rate,
Of the days of that old gentleman who had that old estate;
When they spent the public money at a bountiful old rate

On ev'ry mistress, pimp, and scamp, at ev'ry noble gate,
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

The good old laws were garnished well with gibbets, whips, and chains,
With fine old English penalties, and fine old English pains,
With rebel heads, and seas of blood once hot in rebel veins;
For all these things were requisite to guard the rich old gains
Of the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

This brave old code, like Argus, had a hundred watchful eyes,
And ev'ry English peasant had his good old English spies,
To tempt his starving discontent with fine old English lies,
Then call the good old Yeomanry to stop his peevish cries,
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

The good old times for cutting throats that cried out in their need,
The good old times for hunting men who held their fathers' creed,
The good old times when William Pitt, as all good men agreed,
Came down direct from Paradise at more than railroad speed. . . .
Oh the fine old English Tory times;
When will they come again!

In those rare days, the press was seldom known to snarl or bark,
But sweetly sang of men in pow'r, like any tuneful lark;
Grave judges, too, to all their evil deeds were in the dark;
And not a man in twenty score knew how to make his mark.
Oh the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

Those were the days for taxes, and for war's infernal din;
For scarcity of bread, that fine old dowagers might win;
For shutting men of letters up, through iron bars to grin,
Because they didn't think the Prince was altogether thin,
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

But Tolerance, though slow in flight, is strong-wing'd in the main;
That night must come on these fine days, in course of time was plain;
The pure old spirit struggled, but its struggles were in vain;
A nation's grip was on it, and it died in choking pain,
With the fine old English Tory days,
All of the olden time.

The bright old day now dawns again; the cry runs through the land,
In England there shall be dear bread—in Ireland, sword and brand;
And poverty, and ignorance, shall swell the rich and grand,
So, rally round the rulers with the gentle iron hand,
Oh the fine old English Tory days;
Hail to the coming time! W.

II.—THE QUACK DOCTOR'S PROCLAMATION.

TUNE—"A COBBLER THERE WAS."

AN astonishing doctor has just come to town,
Who will do all the faculty perfectly brown:
He knows all diseases, their causes, and ends;
And he begs to appeal to his medical friends.

Tol de rol:
Diddle doll:
Tol de rol, de dol,
Diddle doll
Tol de rol doll.

He's a magnetic doctor, and knows how to keep
The whole of a Government snoring asleep
To popular clamours; till popular pins
Are stuck in their midriffs—and then he begins

Tol de rol.

He's a *clairvoyant* subject, and readily reads
His countrymen's wishes, condition, and needs,
With many more fine things I can't tell in rhyme,
—And he keeps both his eyes shut the whole of the time.

Tol de rol.

You mustn't expect him to talk; but you'll take
Most particular notice the doctor's awake,
Though for aught from his words or his looks that you reap, he
Might just as well be most confoundedly sleepy.
Tol de rol.

Homœopathy, too, he has practised for ages
(You'll find his prescriptions in Luke Hansard's pages),
Just giving his patient when maddened by pain—
Of Reform the ten thousandth part of a grain.
Tol de rol.

He's a med'cine for Ireland, in portable papers;
The infallible cure for political vapours;
A neat label round it his 'prentices tie—
"Put your trust in the Lord, and keep this powder dry!"
Tol de rol.

He's a corn doctor also, of wonderful skill,
—No cutting, no rooting-up, purging, or pill—
You're merely to take, 'stead of walking or riding,
The sweet schoolboy exercise—innocent sliding.
Tol de rol.

There's no advice gratis. If high ladies send
His legitimate fee, he's their soft-spoken friend.
At the great public counter with one hand behind him,
And one in his waistcoat, they're certain to find him.
Tol de rol.

He has only to add he's the real Doctor Flam,
All others being purely fictitious and sham;
The house is a large one, tall, slated, and white,
With a lobby; and lights in the passage at night.
Tol de rol:
Diddle doll:
Tol de rol, de dol,
Diddle doll
Tol de rol doll.

W.

III.—SUBJECTS FOR PAINTERS.

(After Peter Pindar.)

To you, Sir Martin,* and your co. R.A.'s,
I dedicate in meek, suggestive lays,
Some subjects for your academic palettes;
Hoping by dint of these my scanty jobs,
To fill with novel thoughts your teeming nobs,
As though I beat them in with wooden mallets.

To you, Maclise, who Eve's fair daughters paint
With Nature's hand, and want the maudlin taint
Of the sweet Chalon school of silk and ermine:
To you, E. Landseer, who from year to year
Delight in beasts and birds, and dogs and deer,
And seldom give us any human vermin:

—To all who practise art, or make believe,
I offer subjects they may take or leave.

Great Sibthorp and his butler, in debate
(*Arcades ambo*) on affairs of state,
Not altogether "gone," but rather funny;
Cursing the Whigs for leaving in the lurch
Our d——d good, pleasant, gentlemanly Church,
Would make a picture—cheap at any money.

Or Sibthorp as the Tory Sec.—at-War,
Encouraging his mates with loud "Yhor! Yhor!"
From Treas'ry benches' most conspicuous end;
Or Sib.'s mustachios curling with a smile,
As an expectant Premier without guile
Calls him his honourable and gallant friend.

Or Sibthorp travelling in foreign parts,
Through that rich portion of our Eastern charts
Where lies the land of popular tradition;
And fairly worshipp'd by the true devout
In all his comings-in and goings-out,
Because of the old Turkish superstition.

---

* Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A.

Fame with her trumpet, blowing very hard,
And making earth rich with celestial lard,
In puffing deeds done through Lord Chamberlain Howe;
While some few thousand persons of small gains,
Who give their charities without such pains,
Look up, much wondering what may be the row.

Behind them Joseph Hume, who turns his pate
To where great Marlb'ro' House in princely state
Shelters a host of lacqueys, lords and pages,
And says he knows of dowagers a crowd,
Who, without trumpeting so very loud,
Would do so much, and more, for half the wages.

Limn, sirs, the highest lady in the land,
When Joseph Surface, fawning cap in hand,
Delivers in his list of patriot mortals;
Those gentlemen of honour, faith, and truth,
Who, foul-mouthed, spat upon her maiden youth,
And dog-like did defile her palace portals.

Paint me the Tories, full of grief and woe,
Weeping (to voters) over Frost and Co.,
Their suff'ring, erring, much-enduring brothers.
And in the background don't forget to pack,
Each grinning ghastly from its bloody sack,
The heads of Thistlewood, Despard, and others.

Paint, squandering the club's election gold,
Fierce lovers of our Constitution old,
Lords who're that sacred lady's greatest debtors;
And let the law, forbidding any voice
Or act of Peer to influence the choice
Of English people, flourish in bright letters.

Paint that same dear old lady, ill at ease,
Weak in her second childhood, hard to please,
Unknowing what she ails or what she wishes;
With all her Carlton nephews at the door,
Deaf'ning both aunt and nurses with their roar,
—Fighting already, for the loaves and fishes.

Leaving these hints for you to dwell upon,
I shall presume to offer more anon. W.

PROLOGUE TO WESTLAND MARSTON'S PLAY "THE PATRICIAN'S DAUGHTER."

[1842.]

The title "The Patrician's Daughter" was bestowed upon a play, in the tragic vein, by a then unknown writer, J. Westland Marston, it being his maiden effort in dramatic authorship. Dickens took great interest in the young man, and indicated a desire to promote the welfare of his production by composing some introductory lines. To Macready he wrote: "The more I think of Marston's play, the more sure I feel that a prologue to the purpose would help it materially, and almost decide the fate of any ticklish point on the first night. Now I have an idea (not easily explainable in writing, but told in five words) that would take the prologue out of the conventional dress of prologues, quite. Get the curtain up with a dash, and begin the play with a sledge-hammer blow. If, on consideration, you should agree with me, I will write the prologue, heartily." Happily for the author, his little tragedy was the first new play of the season, and it thus attracted greater attention. Its initial representation took place at Drury Lane Theatre on December 10, 1842, and the fact that Dickens's dignified and vigorous lines were recited by Macready, the leading actor of his day, undoubtedly gave *prestige* to this performance; but the play, although it made a sensation for the moment, did not enjoy a long run, its motive being for some reason misunderstood. It was (to a certain extent) an experiment in testing the effect of a tragedy of modern times and in modern dress, the novelist's Prologue being intended to show that there need be no incongruity between plain clothes of the nineteenth century and high tragedy.

"The Patrician's Daughter: A Tragedy in Five Acts," appeared in pamphlet form during the year prior to its being placed upon the boards. The Prologue was printed for the first time in the "Sunday Times," December 11, 1842, and then in the "Theatrical Journal and Stranger's Guide," December 17, 1842.

In the preface to the second edition of the play (1842), the author thus acknowledges his indebtedness to Dickens for the Prologue, which, however, does not appear in the book: "How shall I thank Mr. Dickens for the spontaneous kindness which has furnished me with so excellent a letter of introduction to the audience? The simplest acknowledgment is perhaps the best, since the least I might say would exceed *his* estimate of the obligation; while the most I could say would fail to express *mine*."—F. G. K.

THE PROLOGUE.

(Spoken by Mr. Macready.)

No tale of streaming plumes and harness bright
Dwells on the poet's maiden harp to-night;

No trumpet's clamour and no battle's fire
Breathes in the trembling accents of his lyre;
Enough for him, if in his lowly strain
He wakes one household echo not in vain;
Enough for him, if in his boldest word
The beating heart of MAN be dimly heard.

Its solemn music which, like strains that sigh
Through charmèd gardens, all who hearing die;
Its solemn music he does not pursue
To distant ages out of human view;
Nor listen to its wild and mournful chime
In the dead caverns on the shore of Time;
But musing with a calm and steady gaze
Before the crackling flames of living days,
He hears it whisper through the busy roar
Of what shall be and what has been before.
Awake the Present! Shall no scene display
The tragic passion of the passing day?
Is it with Man, as with some meaner things,
That out of death his single purpose springs?
Can his eventful life no moral teach
Until he be, for aye, beyond its reach?
Obscurely shall he suffer, act, and fade,
Dubb'd noble only by the sexton's spade?
Awake the Present! Though the steel-clad age
Find life alone within its storied page,
Iron is worn, at heart, by many still—
The tyrant Custom binds the serf-like will;
If the sharp rack, and screw, and chain be gone,
These later days have tortures of their own;
The guiltless writhe, while Guilt is stretch'd in sleep,
And Virtue lies, too often, dungeon deep.
Awake the Present! what the Past has sown
Be in its harvest garner'd, reap'd, and grown!
How pride breeds pride, and wrong engenders wrong,
Read in the volume Truth has held so long,
Assured that where life's flowers freshest blow,
The sharpest thorns and keenest briars grow,
How social usage has the pow'r to change
Good thoughts to evil; in its highest range
To cramp the noble soul, and turn to ruth
The kindling impulse of our glorious youth,

Crushing the spirit in its house of clay,
Learn from the lessons of the present day.
Not light its import and not poor its mien;
Yourselves the actors, and your homes the scene.

A WORD IN SEASON.

FROM "THE KEEPSAKE."

[1844.]

One of the many fashionable annuals published during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, "The Keepsake," had for its editor in 1844 the "gorgeous" Countess of Blessington, the reigning beauty who held court at Gore House, Kensington, where many political, artistic, and literary celebrities foregathered—Bulwer Lytton, Disraeli, Dickens, Ainsworth, D'Orsay, and the rest. Her ladyship, through her personal charm and natural gifts, succeeded in securing the services of eminent authors for the aristocratic publication; even Dickens could not resist her appeal, and in a letter to Forster (dated July, 1843) he wrote: "I have heard, as you have, from Lady Blessington, for whose behalf I have this morning penned the lines I send you herewith. But I have only done so to excuse myself, for I have not the least idea of their suiting her; and I hope she will send them back to you for the 'Examiner.'" Lady Blessington, however, decided to retain the thoughtful little poem which was referred to in the "London Review" (twenty-three years later) as "a graceful and sweet apologue, reminding one of the manner of Hood." The theme of the poem, which Forster describes as "a clever and pointed parable in verse," was afterwards satirised in Chadband ("Bleak House"), and in the idea of religious conversion through the agency of "moral pocket-handkerchiefs."—F. G. K.

A WORD IN SEASON.

They have a superstition in the East,
That Allah, written on a piece of paper,
Is better unction than can come of priest,
Of rolling incense, and of lighted taper:
Holding, that any scrap which bears that name,
In any characters, its front imprest on,
Shall help the finder through the purging flame,
And give his toasted feet a place to rest on.

Accordingly, they make a mighty fuss
With ev'ry wretched tract and fierce oration,
And hoard the leaves—for they are not, like us,

A highly civilised and thinking nation:
And, always stooping in the miry ways,
To look for matter of this earthy leaven,
They seldom, in their dust-exploring days,
Have any leisure to look up to Heaven.

So have I known a country on the earth,
Where darkness sat upon the living waters,
And brutal ignorance, and toil, and dearth
Were the hard portion of its sons and daughters:
And yet, where they who should have ope'd the door
Of charity and light, for all men's finding,
Squabbled for words upon the altar-floor,
And rent the Book, in struggles for the binding.

The gentlest man among these pious Turks,
God's living image ruthlessly defaces;
Their best high-churchman, with no faith in works,
Bowstrings the Virtues in the market-places:
The Christian Pariah, whom both sects curse
(They curse all other men, and curse each other),
Walks thro' the world, not very much the worse—
Does all the good he can, and loves his brother.

VERSES FROM THE "DAILY NEWS."

[1846.]

The "Daily News," it will be remembered, was founded in January, 1846, by Charles Dickens, who officiated as its first editor. He soon sickened of the mechanical drudgery appertaining to the position, and resigned his editorial functions the following month. From January 21st to March 2nd he contributed to its columns a series of "Travelling Sketches," afterwards reprinted in volume form as "Pictures from Italy." He also availed himself of the opportunity afforded him, by his association with that newspaper, of once more taking up the cudgels against the Tories, and, as in the case of the "Examiner," his attack was conveyed through the medium of some doggerel verses. These were entitled "The British Lion—A New Song, but an Old Story," to be sung to the tune of "The Great Sea-Snake." They bore the signature of "Catnach," the famous ballad-singer, and were printed in the "Daily News" of January 24th, 1846.

Three weeks later some verses of a totally different character appeared in the columns of the "Daily News," signed in full "Charles Dickens." One Lucy Simpkins, of Bremhill (or Bremble), a parish

in Wiltshire, had just previously addressed a night meeting of the wives of agricultural labourers in that county, in support of a petition for Free Trade, and her vigorous speech on that occasion inspired Dickens to write "The Hymn of the Wiltshire Labourers," thus offering an earnest protest against oppression. Concerning the "Hymn," a writer in a recent issue of "Christmas Bells" observes: "It breathes in every line the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, the love of the All-Father, the Redemption by His Son, and that love to God and man on which hang all the law and the prophets."—F. G. K.

I.—THE BRITISH LION.

A NEW SONG, BUT AN OLD STORY.

TUNE—"THE GREAT SEA-SNAKE."

OH, p'r'aps you may have heard, and if not, I'll sing
Of the British Lion free,
That was constantly a-going for to make a spring
Upon his en-e-me;
But who, being rather groggy at the knees,
Broke down, always, before;
And generally gave a feeble wheeze
Instead of a loud roar.
Right toor rol, loor rol, fee faw fum,
The British Lion bold!
That was always a-going for to do great things,
And was always being "sold!"

He was carried about, in a carawan,
And was show'd in country parts,
And they said, "Walk up! Be in time! He can
Eat Corn-Law Leagues like tarts!"
And his showmen, shouting there and then,
To puff him didn't fail,
And they said, as they peep'd into his den,
"Oh, don't he wag his tail!"

Now, the principal keeper of this poor old beast,
WAN HUMBUG was his name,
Would once ev'ry day stir him up—at least—
And wasn't that a Game!
For he hadn't a tooth, and he hadn't a claw,
In that "Struggle" so "Sublime";
And, however sharp they touch'd him on the raw,
He couldn't come up to time.

And this, you will observe, was the reason why
  Wan Humbug, on weak grounds,
Was forced to make believe that he heard his cry
  In all unlikely sounds.
So, there wasn't a bleat from an Essex Calf,
  Or a Duke or a Lordling slim;
But he said, with a wery triumphant laugh,
  "I'm blest if that ain't him."

At length, wery bald in his mane and tail,
  The British Lion growed:
He pined, and declined, and he satisfied
  The last debt which he owed.
And when they came to examine the skin,
  It was a wonder sore,
To find that the an-i-mal within
  Was nothing but a Boar!
    Right toor rol, loor rol, fee faw fum,
      The British Lion bold!
    That was always a-going for to do great things,
      And was always being "sold!"

Catnach.

II.—THE HYMN OF THE WILTSHIRE LABOURERS.

"Don't you all think that we have a great need to Cry to our God to put it in the hearts of our greassous Queen and her Members of Parlerment to grant us free bread!"—Lucy Simpkins, *at Bremhill.*

Oh God, who by Thy Prophet's hand
  Didst smite the rocky brake,
Whence water came, at Thy command,
  Thy people's thirst to slake;
Strike, now, upon this granite wall,
  Stern, obdurate, and high;
And let some drops of pity fall
  For us who starve and die!

The God, who took a little child,
  And set him in the midst,
And promised him His mercy mild,
  As, by Thy Son, Thou didst;
Look down upon our children dear,
  So gaunt, so cold, so spare,

And let their images appear
Where Lords and Gentry are!

Oh God, teach them to feel how we,
When our poor infants droop,
Are weakened in our trust in Thee,
And how our spirits stoop;
For, in Thy rest, so bright and fair,
All tears and sorrows sleep:
And their young looks, so full of care,
Would make Thine Angels weep!

The God, who with His finger drew
The Judgment coming on,
Write, for these men, what must ensue,
Ere many years be gone!
Oh God, whose bow is in the sky,
Let them not brave and dare,
Until they look (too late) on high,
And see an Arrow there!

Oh God, remind them! In the bread
They break upon the knee,
These sacred words may yet be read,
"In memory of Me!"
Oh God, remind them of His sweet
Compassion for the poor,
And how He gave them Bread to eat,
And went from door to door!

CHARLES DICKENS.

LINES ADDRESSED TO MARK LEMON.

[1849.]

DICKENS, like Silas Wegg, would sometimes "drop into poetry" when writing to intimate friends, as, for example, in a letter to Maclise, the artist, which began with a parody of Byron's lines to Thomas Moore—

"My foot is in the house,
My bath is on the sea,
And, before I take a souse,
Here's a single note to thee."

A more remarkable instance of his propensity to indulge in parody of this kind is to be found in a letter addressed to Mark Lemon in the spring of 1849. The novelist was then enjoying a holiday with his wife and daughters at Brighton, whence he wrote to Lemon (who had been ill), pressing him to pay them a visit. After commanding him to "get a clean pocket-handkerchief ready for the close of 'Copperfield' No. 3—'simple and quiet, but very natural and touching'—'Evening Bore,'" Dickens invites his friend in lines headed "New Song," and signed "T. Sparkler," the effusion also bearing the signatures of other members of the family party—Catherine Dickens, Annie Leech, Georgina Hogarth, Mary Dickens, Katie Dickens, and John Leech.—F. G. K.

NEW SONG.

TUNE—"LESBIA HATH A BEAMING EYE."

I.

LEMON is a little hipped,
And this is Lemon's true position—
He is not pale, he's not white-lipped,
Yet wants a little fresh condition.
Sweeter 'tis to gaze upon
Old Ocean's rising, falling billers,
Than on the Houses every one
That form the street called Saint Anne's Willers!
Oh my Lemon, round and fat,
Oh my bright, my right, my tight 'un,
Think a little what you're at—
Don't stay at home, but come to Brighton!

II.

Lemon has a coat of frieze,
But all so seldom Lemon wears it,
That it is a prey to fleas,
And ev'ry moth that's hungry, tears it.
Oh, that coat's the coat for me,
That braves the railway sparks and breezes,
Leaving ev'ry engine free
To smoke it, till its owner sneezes!
Then my Lemon, round and fat,
L., my bright, my right, my tight 'un,
Think a little what you're at—
On Tuesday first, come down to Brighton!

T. SPARKLER.

POEMS FROM "HOUSEHOLD WORDS."

[1850–1851.]

The two following poems were discovered recently by means of the Contributors' Book to "Household Words." "Hiram Powers' Greek Slave" appeared in that paper on October 26th, 1850, and "Aspire!" on January 25th, 1851.—Ed.

I.—HIRAM POWERS' GREEK SLAVE.

They say Ideal Beauty cannot enter
The house of anguish. On the threshold stands
This alien Image with the shackled hands,
Called the Greek Slave: as if the artist meant her
(The passionless perfection which he lent her,
Shadowed, not darkened, where the sill expands)
To, so, confront man's crimes in different lands,
With man's ideal sense. Pierce to the centre
Art's fiery finger! and break up ere long
The serfdom of this world. Appeal, fair stone,
From God's pure heights of beauty, against man's wrong!
Catch up, in thy divine face, not alone
East griefs, but west, and strike and shame the strong,
By thunders of white silence, overthrown.

II.—ASPIRE!

Aspire! whatever fate befall,
Be it praise or blame—
Aspire! even when deprived of all—
It is thy nature's aim.
The seed beneath the frozen earth,
When winter checks the fresh green birth,
Still yearningly aspires,
With ripening desires,
And, in its season, it will shoot
Up into the perfect fruit;
But had it not lain low,
It ne'er had learn'd to grow.

Aspire! for in thyself alone
That power belongs of right;

Within thyself that seed is sown,
Which strives to reach the light;
All pride of rank, all pomp of place,
All pinnacles that point in space,
But show thee, to the spheres,
No greater than thy peers;
But if thy spirit doth aspire,
Thou risest ever higher—higher—
Towards that consummate end,
When Heavenward we tend.

WILKIE COLLINS'S PLAY, "THE LIGHTHOUSE."

[1855.]

Wilkie Collins composed two powerful dramas for representation at Dickens's residence, Tavistock House, a portion of which had been already adapted for private theatricals, the rooms so converted being described in the bills as "The Smallest Theatre in the World." The first of these plays was called "The Lighthouse," and the initial performance took place on June 19th, 1855. Dickens not only wrote the Prologue and "The Song of the Wreck," but signally distinguished himself by enacting the part of Aaron Gurnock, a lighthouse-keeper, his clever impersonation recalling Frédéric Lemaître, the only actor he ever tried to take as a model.

With regard to "The Song of the Wreck," Dickens evidently intended to bestow upon it a different title, for, in a letter addressed to Wilkie Collins during the preparation of the play, he said: "I have written a little ballad for Mary—'The Story of the Ship's Carpenter and the Little Boy, in the Shipwreck.'" The song was rendered by his eldest daughter, Mary (who assumed the rôle of Phœbe in the play); it was set to the music composed by George Linley for Miss Charlotte Young's pretty ballad, "Little Nell," of which Dickens became very fond, and which his daughter had been in the habit of singing to him constantly since her childhood. Dr. A. W. Ward, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge University, refers to "The Song of the Wreck" as "a most successful effort in Cowper's manner."—F. G. K.

I.—THE PROLOGUE.

(*Slow music all the time; unseen speaker; curtain down.*)

A story of those rocks where doom'd ships come
To cast them wreck'd upon the steps of home,

Where solitary men, the long year through—
The wind their music and the brine their view—
Warn mariners to shun the beacon-light;
A story of those rocks is here to-night.
Eddystone Lighthouse!

(*Exterior view discovered.*)

In its ancient form,
Ere he who built it wish'd for the great storm
That shiver'd it to nothing,* once again
Behold outgleaming on the angry main!
Within it are three men; to these repair
In our frail bark of Fancy, swift as air!
They are but shadows, as the rower grim
Took none but shadows in his boat with him.

So be *ye* shades, and, for a little space,
The real world a dream without a trace.
Return is easy. It will have ye back
Too soon to the old beaten dusty track;
For but one hour forget it. Billows, rise:
Blow winds, fall rain, be black, ye midnight skies;
And you who watch the light, arise! arise!

(*Exterior view rises and discovers the scene.*)

II.—THE SONG OF THE WRECK.

I.

The wind blew high, the waters raved,
A ship drove on the land,
A hundred human creatures saved
Kneel'd down upon the sand.
Three-score were drown'd, three-score were thrown
Upon the black rocks wild,

---

* When Winstanley had brought his work to completion, he is said to have expressed himself so satisfied as to its strength, that he only wished he might be there in the fiercest storm that ever blew. His wish was gratified, and, contrary to his expectations, both he and the building were swept completely away by a furious tempest which burst along the coast in November, 1703.—Ed.

And thus among them, left alone,
They found one helpless child

II.

A seaman rough, to shipwreck bred,
Stood out from all the rest,
And gently laid the lonely head
Upon his honest breast.
And travelling o'er the desert wide
It was a solemn joy,
To see them, ever side by side,
The sailor and the boy.

III.

In famine, sickness, hunger, thirst,
The two were still but one,
Until the strong man droop'd the first
And felt his labours done.
Then to a trusty friend he spake,
"Across the desert wide,
O take this poor boy for my sake!"
And kiss'd the child and died.

IV.

Toiling along in weary plight
Through heavy jungle, mire,
These two came later every night
To warm them at the fire.
Until the captain said one day,
"O seaman good and kind,
To save thyself now come away,
And leave the boy behind!"

V.

The child was slumbering near the blaze:
"O captain, let him rest
Until it sinks, when God's own ways
Shall teach us what is best!"
They watch'd the whiten'd ashy heap,
They touch'd the child in vain;
They did not leave him there asleep,
He never woke again.

PROLOGUE TO WILKIE COLLINS'S PLAY, "THE FROZEN DEEP."

[1856.]

The second drama written by Wilkie Collins for the Tavistock House Theatre was first acted there in January, 1857, and subsequently at the Gallery of Illustration in the presence of Queen Victoria and the Royal Family. As in the case of "The Lighthouse," the play had the advantage of a Prologue in rhyme by Charles Dickens, who again electrified his audiences by marvellous acting, the character of Richard Wardour (a young naval officer) being selected by him for representation.

The Prologue was recited at Tavistock House by John Forster, and at the public performances of the play by Dickens himself.

It is not generally known that a by no means inconsiderable portion of the drama was composed by Dickens, as testified by the original manuscripts of the play and of the prompt-book, which contain numerous additions and corrections in his handwriting. These manuscripts, by the way, realised £300 at Sotheby's in 1890.

The main idea of "A Tale of Two Cities" was conceived by Dickens when performing in "The Frozen Deep." "A strong desire was upon me then," he writes in the preface to the story, "to embody it in my own person; and I traced out in my fancy the state of mind of which it would necessitate the presentation to an observant spectator, with particular care and interest. As the idea became familiar to me, it gradually shaped itself into its present form. Throughout its execution, it has had complete possession of me: I have so far verified what is done and suffered in these pages, as that I have certainly done and suffered it all myself."—F. G. K.

THE PROLOGUE.

(*Curtain rises; mists and darkness; soft music throughout.*)

One savage footprint on the lonely shore
Where one man listen'd to the surge's roar,
Not all the winds that stir the mighty sea
Can ever ruffle in the memory.
If such its interest and thrall, O then
Pause on the footprints of heroic men,
Making a garden of the desert wide
Where Parry conquer'd death and Franklin died.

To that white region where the Lost lie low,
Wrapt in their mantles of eternal snow—
Unvisited by change, nothing to mock
Those statues sculptured in the icy rock—
We pray your company; that hearts as true

(Though nothings of the air) may live for you;
Nor only yet that on our little glass
A faint reflection of those wilds may pass,
But that the secrets of the vast Profound
Within us, an exploring hand may sound,
Testing the region of the ice-bound soul,
Seeking the passage at its northern pole,
Softening the horrors of its wintry sleep,
Melting the surface of that "Frozen Deep."

Vanish, ye mists! But ere this gloom departs,
And to the union of three sister arts
We give a winter evening, good to know
That in the charms of such another show,
That in the fiction of a friendly play,
The Arctic sailors, too, put gloom away,
Forgot their long night, saw no starry dome,
Hail'd the warm sun, and were again at Home.

Vanish, ye mists! Not yet do we repair
To the still country of the piercing air;
But seek, before we cross the troubled seas,
An English hearth and Devon's waving trees.

A CHILD'S HYMN.

FROM "THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY."

[1856.]

The Christmas number of "Household Words" for 1856 is especially noteworthy as containing the Hymn of five verses which Dickens contributed to the second chapter. This made a highly favourable impression, and a certain clergyman, the Rev. R. H. Davies, was induced to express to the editor of "Household Words" his gratitude to the author of these lines for having thus conveyed to innumerable readers such true religious sentiments. In acknowledging the receipt of the letter, Dickens observed that such a mark of approval was none the less gratifying to him because he was himself the author of the Hymn. "There cannot be many men, I believe," he added, "who have a more humble veneration for the New Testament, or a more profound conviction of its all-sufficiency, than I have. If I am ever (as you tell me I am) mistaken on this subject, it is because I discountenance all obtrusive professions of and tradings in religion, as one of the main causes why real Christianity has been retarded in this world; and because my observation of life induces me to hold in unspeakable dread and horror those unseemly squab-

bles about the letter which drive the spirit out of hundreds of thousands."—F. G. K.

A CHILD'S HYMN.

HEAR my prayer, O! Heavenly Father,
Ere I lay me down to sleep;
Bid Thy Angels, pure and holy,
Round my bed their vigil keep.

My sins are heavy, but Thy mercy
Far outweighs them every one;
Down before Thy Cross I cast them,
Trusting in Thy help alone.

Keep me through this night of peril
Underneath its boundless shade;
Take me to Thy rest, I pray Thee,
When my pilgrimage is made.

None shall measure out Thy patience
By the span of human thought;
None shall bound the tender mercies
Which Thy Holy Son has bought.

Pardon all my past transgressions,
Give me strength for days to come;
Guide and guard me with Thy blessing
Till Thy Angels bid me home.

THE BLACKSMITH.

FROM "ALL THE YEAR ROUND."

[APRIL 20, 1859.]

IN the chapter of Forster's "Life of Dickens" dealing with "All the Year Round," the biographer refers to an article of Dickens's in the first number of that periodical entitled "The Poor Man and his Beer," and states how he came to write it.

The Rev. T. B. Lawes of Rothamsted, St. Albans, had interested Dickens in a club that had been set on foot to enable the agricultural labourers of the parish to have their beer and pipes independent of the public house, and the description of it, says Mr. Lawes, "was the occupation of a drive between this place (Rothamsted) and London, 25 miles. . . . In the course of our conversation I mentioned that the labourers were very jealous of the small tradesmen, black-

smiths and others, holding allotment gardens; but that the latter did so indirectly by paying higher rents to the labourers for a share." This circumstance is not forgotten in the verses on the Blacksmith in the same number, composed by Dickens, which close the mention of his gains with allusion to—

"A share (concealed) in the poor man's field,
Which adds to the poor man's store."

—Ed.

THE BLACKSMITH.

Old England, she has great warriors,
Great princes, and poets great;
But the Blacksmith is not to be quite forgot,
In the history of the State.

He is rich in the best of all metals,
Yet silver he lacks and gold;
And he payeth his due, and his heart is true,
Though he bloweth both hot and cold.

The boldest is he of incendiaries
That ever the wide world saw,
And a forger as rank as e'er robbed the Bank,
Though he never doth break the law.

He hath shoes that are worn by strangers,
Yet he laugheth and maketh more;
And a share (concealed) in the poor man's field,
Yet it adds to the poor man's store.

Then, hurrah for the iron Blacksmith!
And hurrah for his iron crew!
And whenever we go where his forges glow,
We'll sing what A MAN can do.

THE END.

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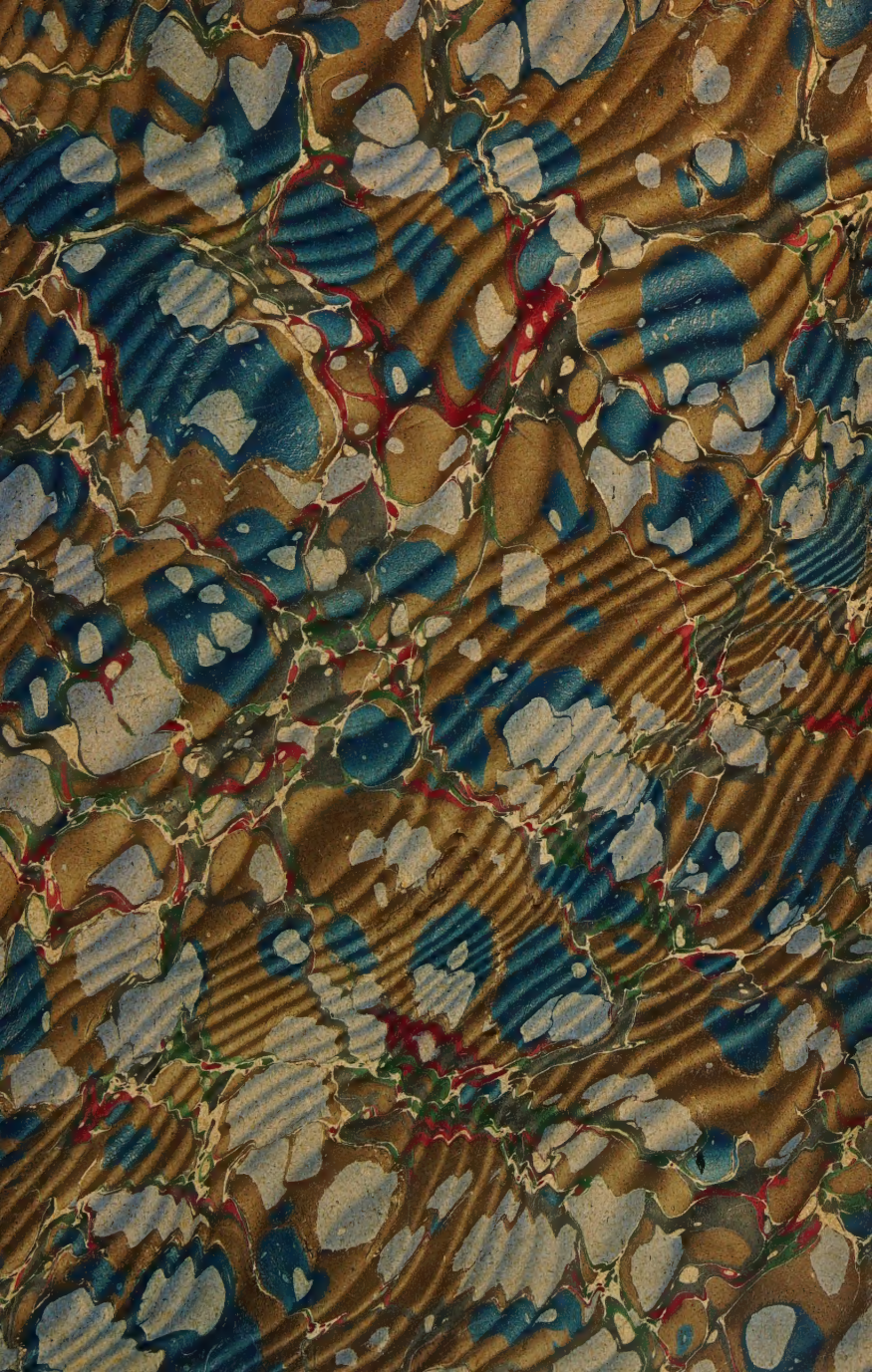
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